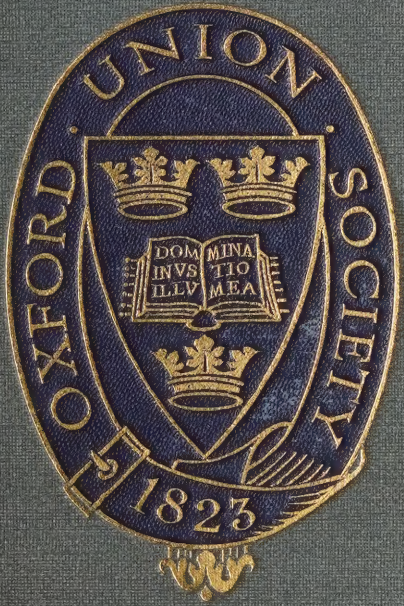
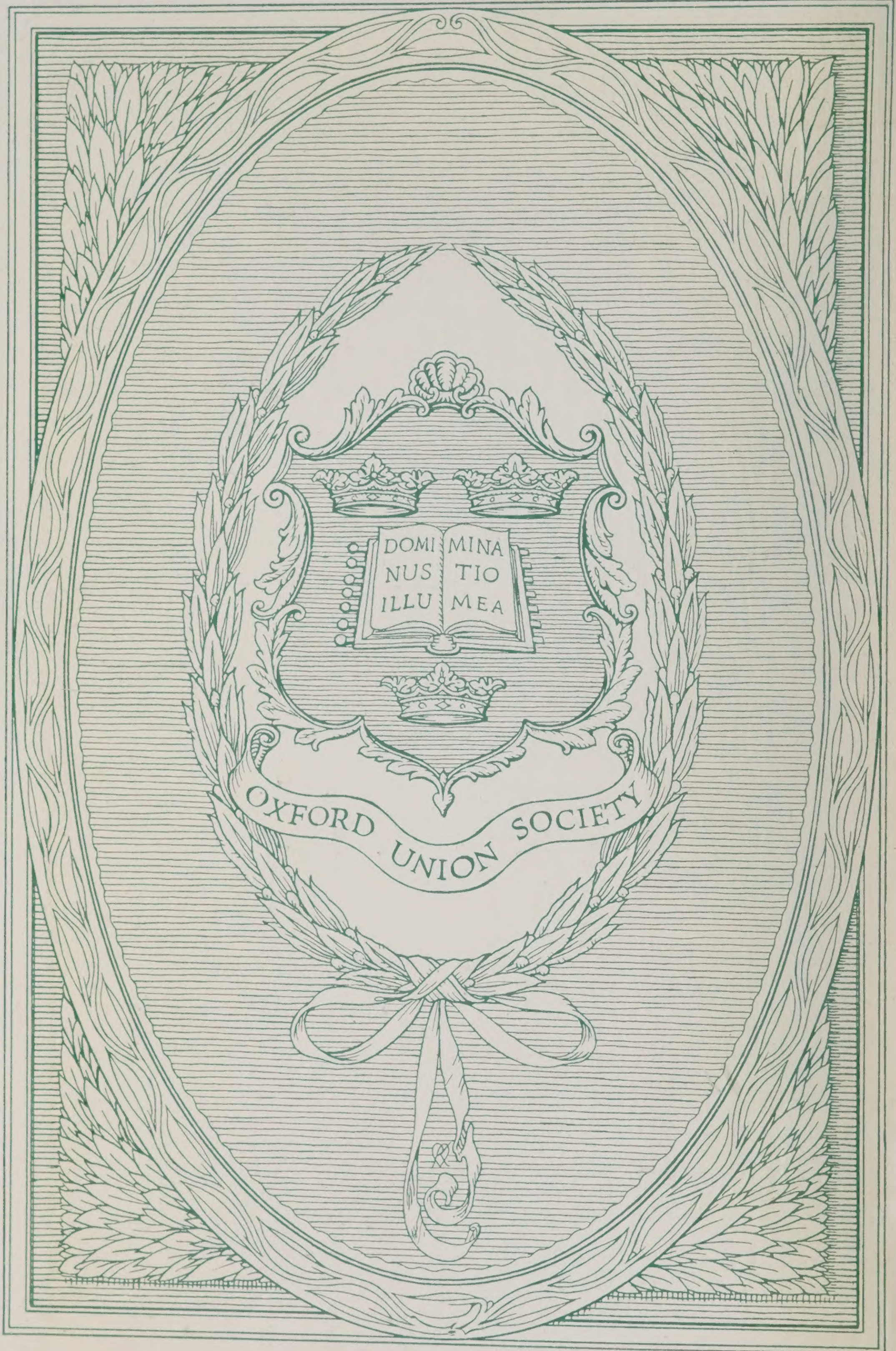
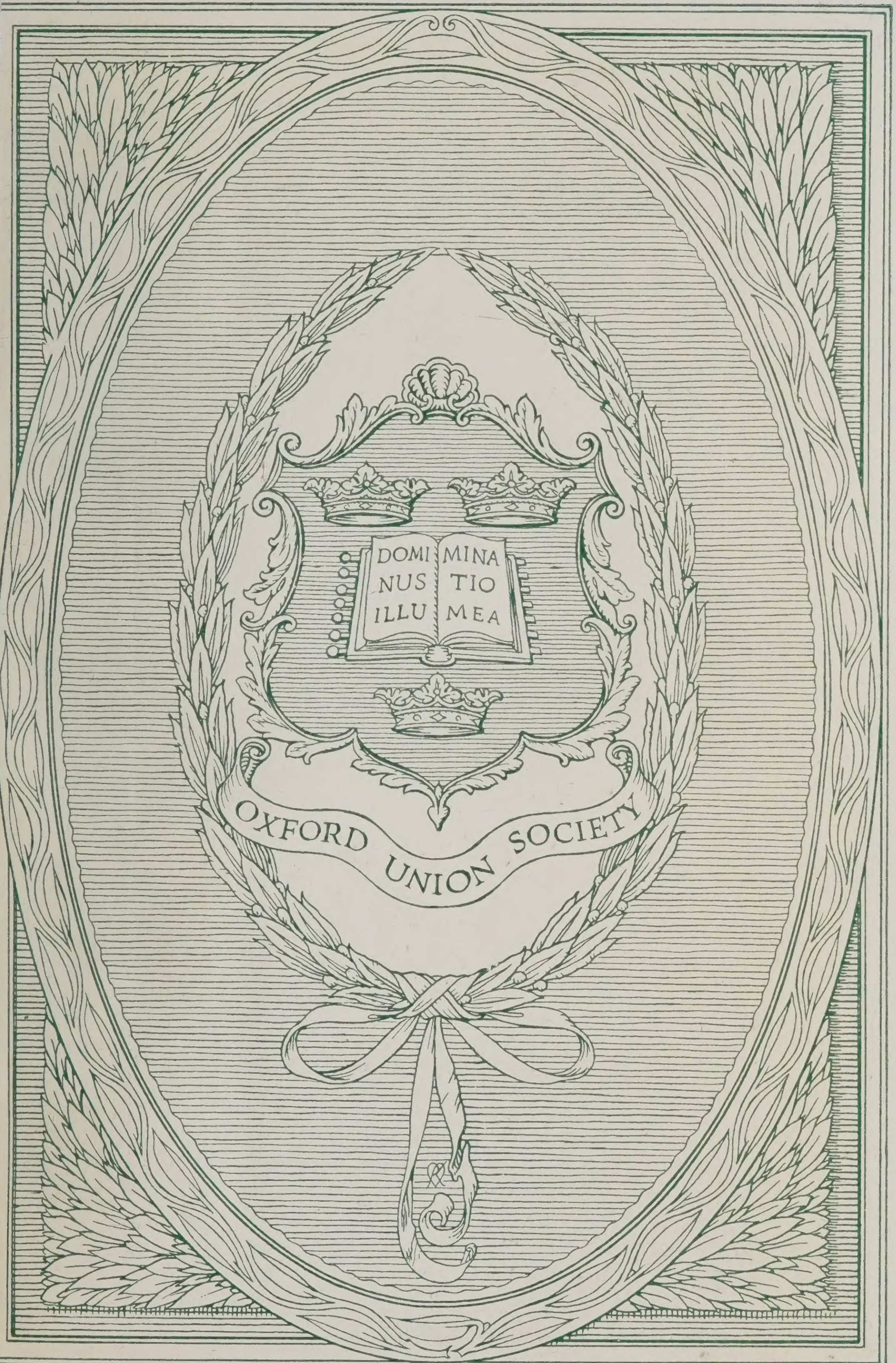
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
3 1761 01144625 9


OXFORD UNION SOCIETY
DOM INVS ILLV
MINA TIO MEA
1823


DOMI MINA
NUS TIO
ILLU MEA
OXFORD UNION SOCIETY

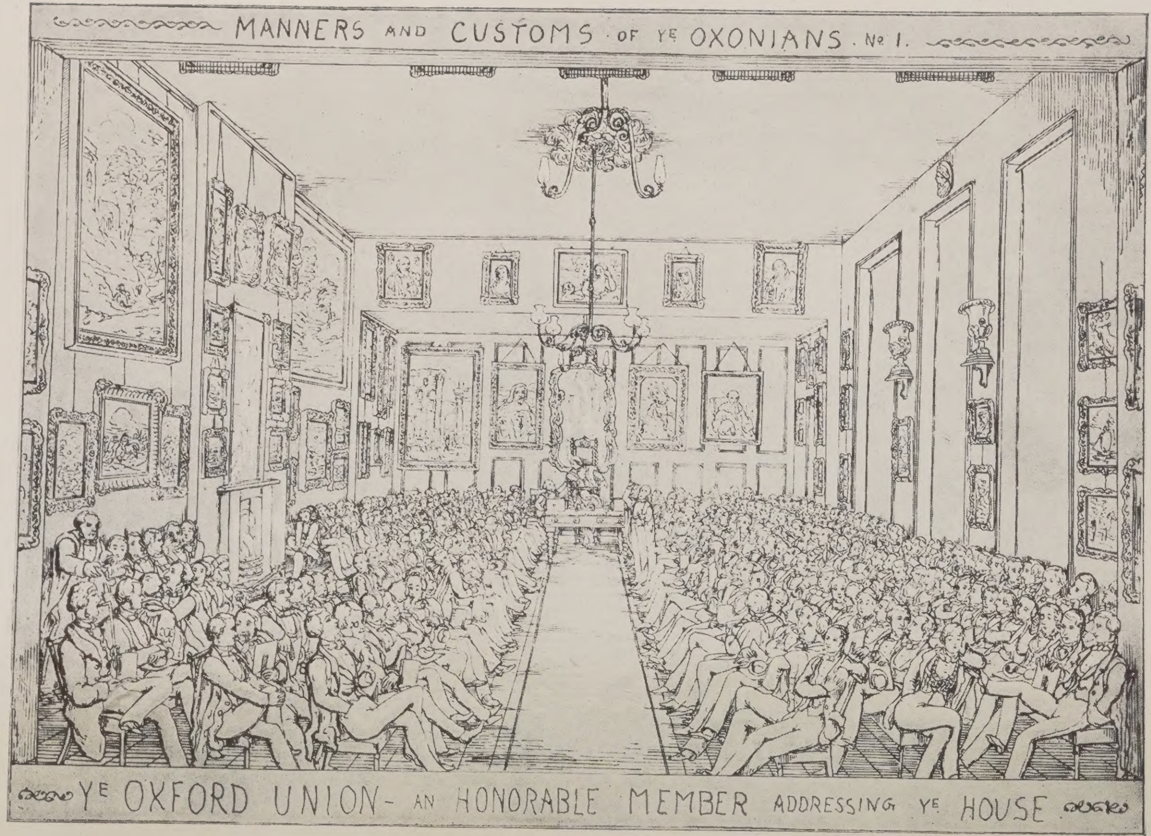
4145


DOMI NUS ILLU
MINA TIO MEA
OXFORD UNION SOCIETY

THE OXFORD UNION 1823–1923

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026 with funding from
University of Toronto

https://archive.org/details/oxfordunion182310000morr


MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF Yᴱ OXONIANS. Nº I.
Yᴱ OXFORD UNION — AN HONORABLE MEMBER ADDRESSING Yᴱ HOUSE.

A DEBATE AT THE UNION, 1851.

From the Drawing by "Cuthbert Bede" (Edward Bradley) in the possession of the Oxford Union Society.

ducat.
Univ.
Oxf.
M.

THE OXFORD UNION

1823-1923

By

HERBERT ARTHUR MORRAH

A Former President of the Society

188104.
29. 2. 24.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LTD
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne
1923

Printed in Great Britain.

To

PREDECESSORS AND SUCCESSORS
IN THE UNION CHAIR

IN AFFECTIONATE MEMORY
OF
JOHN ARTHUR VICTOR MAGEE
ROBERT CHARLES PHILLIMORE
CLAUDE HENRY ELIOT
THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED
GRATEFULLY FOR THE PAST
HOPEFULLY FOR THE FUTURE

ALTIORA IN VOTIS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I desire to express to the President of the Oxford Union, Mr. M. C. Hollis of Balliol, and to the whole of his Standing Committee, my cordial thanks for their assistance.

Members of the Union of many generations have given me liberal help, and I must very particularly thank Dr. Talbot, Bishop of Winchester, Dr. H. A. James, President of St. John's, and Sir Herbert Warren, President of Magdalen. The Earl of Birkenhead, Sir John Simon, Mr. G. F. Mortimer, K.C., Mr. G. O. Bellewes, Mr. F. H. Coller, and Mr. F. W. Hirst are among the numerous ex-presidents of the Union who have aided me, and the letters and papers of many who are no longer with us were entrusted to me for inclusion in these records.

Mr. Joseph Clayton (sometime of Worcester College) has enabled me to overcome many difficulties, and I shall always be grateful for what he has done.

H. A. M.

Oxford, *October*, 1923.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

1. THE UNITED SOCIETY OF 1823: ITS ORIGIN AND BEGINNINGS 1

2. THE UNION ENLARGES ITS FIELD OF ACTION: THE GREAT SHELLEY DEBATE 18

3. ENTER A FUTURE CARDINAL—MANNING: A FUTURE PRIME MINISTER—GLADSTONE: WITH SIDE-LIGHTS ON THEIR FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES . 39

4. "UNIOMACHIA"—THE BATTLE OF THE "RAMBLERS" 57

5. FABER AND "IDEAL" WARD: THE TREVOR-LOWE ROW: MOWBRAY, STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, JOHN RUSKIN AND OTHERS AS "INCARNATIONS OF THE UNION" 75

6. IN THE 'FORTIES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: A TIME OF GRADUAL GROWTH FOR THE UNION . 91

7. FROM 1840 TO 1850: THE UNION OFFERS A FIELD TO MANY TALENTS 110

8. ENTER A SECOND PRIME MINISTER—LORD ROBERT CECIL, THIRD MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: A GREAT DEBATE ON PROTECTION AND FREE TRADE 126

9. PROGRESS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNION IN THE TIME OF GEORGE GOSCHEN, CHARLES BOWEN, JOHN MORLEY, FREDERIC HARRISON: WITH A GLANCE AT ITS LIMITATIONS AND ITS HUMOURS 147

CHAPTER PAGE

10. ART AT THE UNION: DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, WILLIAM MORRIS, EDWARD BURNE-JONES AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITE MOVEMENT; A TRAGIC COMEDY STILL RIPENING FOR DEVELOPMENT; THE ARTHURIAN FRESCOES DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED 166

11. THE INFLUENCE AND THE MIND OF THE UNION: SCHOLARS, STATESMEN, AND A FUTURE KING: THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1860 AND 1870 SHOWS DEVELOPMENTS NATIONAL, POLITICAL AND GENERAL 192

12. THE INTERESTS OF THE UNION, BETWEEN 1862 AND 1872, RANGE FROM PICTURES IN PICCADILLY TO PARTRIDGES IN PAPHLAGONIA: A CHAPTER OF MEMOIRS, JUDICIAL, EPISCOPAL AND ACADEMIC 212

13. THE JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF OCTOBER 22, 1873 234

14. ENTER A THIRD PRIME MINISTER—MR. ASQUITH: THE POLITICAL SUCCESSION CONTINUED: LORD CURZON: LORD MILNER: LORD AMPTHILL—A FAMOUS "BLUE" 253

15. THE CANVASSING QUESTION IS SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS: A REVIVAL USHERS IN THE TIME OF F. E. SMITH, BELLOC AND SIMON . . 269

16. THE STEWARDSHIP OF MR. GILL: THE "BRITISH WORKMAN": THE UNION IN PROSE AND VERSE 297

EPILOGUE 305

APPENDIX; PRESIDENTS OF THE OXFORD UNION, 1823–1923 313

INDEX 317

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A Debate of the Union, 1851. From the Drawing by "Cuthbert Bede" (Edward Bradley) . . *Frontispiece.*

FACING PAGE

W. E. Gladstone welcoming the Deputation from the Cambridge Union to Oxford, November 26, 1829 . . 34

A Page from the Union Debates, 1830 35

The Library: Originally (1857) the Debating Hall . . 86

The Union Debating Hall, 1878 87

The Old Doorway, Union Buildings 150

The President's Chair 150

King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. By Arthur Monro 151

The Death of Merlin. By E. Burne-Jones . . . 166

The Death of Arthur. By Arthur Hughes . . . 167

Sir Lancelot's Vision of the San Grail. By Dante Gabriel Rossetti 170

Study for the Figure of Guinevere standing by the Apple Tree 171

The Angel of the Grail. By Dante Gabriel Rossetti . 182

Three Studies of Guinevere and Lancelot. By Dante Gabriel Rossetti 183

Sir Pelleas and the Lady Etarde. By Val. C. Prinsep, R.A.. 188

King Arthur's First Victory with the Sword. By William Riviere 189

The Smoking-Room 198

List of Illustrations

FACING PAGE

The Old Rooms from the Garden 199

The Old Lobby 199

Albert Edward Prince of Wales (King Edward the Seventh) at Oxford, 1860. From the painting by Sir J. Watson Gordon, R.A., P.R.S.A. 204

The Union Buildings, Oxford 205

An Oxford Harlequinade. From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O. 206

The Great Western Railway Up a Tree. From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O. 207

Journalistic Symptoms: Another Alarm for the University. From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O. . . 207

Poetry at Oxford in 1867. From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O. 208

Ruskin *versus* Burgon: Hardy *versus* Gladstone. (Two Contests of Special Interest to the Union.) From the Cartoons by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O. 209

The "Gladstone Memorial" of 1868. From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O. 210

An Unofficial View of the Poet Swinburne. From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O. 211

Jubilee of the Union—Debate on the Disestablishment of the Church 238

Some Signatures from the Attendance Roll of the Jubilee Dinner 239

Three Prime Ministers: William Ewart Gladstone, by E. Onslow Ford, R.A. Robert, Third Marquis of Salisbury, by Sir George Frampton, R.A. Herbert Henry Asquith, by Mrs. Claire Sheridan 278

The New Writing Room, 1911 279

The New Building, 1911 310

A Union Debate, 1922, on Victorianism 311

The Oxford Union, 1823-1923

CHAPTER I

THE UNITED SOCIETY OF 1823: ITS ORIGIN AND BEGINNINGS

AS our minds lie open to the records which are to unfold a story still growing into new and more vigorous life after a hundred years, vivid reflections spring forth from a statesman's pages:

"Perhaps there is no time when the heart is more open, the brain more quick, the memory more rich and happy, than when men, knit by every sympathy, meet in college intercourse, hesitating, as it were, on the verge of active life; impart to each other all their thoughts and plans and projects; high fancies and glorious visions of personal fame and national regeneration. Why should such enthusiasm ever die? Life is too short to be little."

The paraphrase is from "Coningsby." In another moment we are at Oxford, in Millbank's rooms at Oriel. The young men "talk all day and late into the night." Their converse soon becomes political. Coningsby, fresh from Cambridge, renews with Millbank his recollections of Eton, and so the two proceed to consider, almost to settle the affairs of the nation, just like their prototypes or successors all the world over. With rare skill—though Disraeli was not an Oxford man—the true note of Oxford is struck, the atmosphere realized, of vital causes lost or gained.

Here, in fancy, the time reviewed is the earlier part of the nineteenth century, politically reflected in many another novel. Now, in fact, we stand not too far advanced in the twentieth, and though the parallel may only be a rough one, it is often in novels of our most prolific period that the best presentments of certain social values can be found. Few, indeed, have been able to fix more truly than the astonishing alien who was to fulfil the highest political ambitions—and yet to leave a definite mark in literature—the bright, evanescent aspirations of eager youth : or to appreciate the fever of personal feeling which makes a politician of nearly every Englishman. But these are memories, when related to Oxford life, which work backwards as well as forwards. Memory, too, may well invoke an Oxford which in contrast with a busy outer world is generally considered strange or rare ; traditionally unpractical, unreasonable ; above all, elusive.

What is a University? Oxford dons to this day ask the question, declaring that there is no answer. Others inquire: *Can such a place ever have existed?* The latter query receives a reply more easily. Our questioners seem to assume the indolence, extravagance, absurdity of University life in general, of Oxford life in particular, after going through the mill of it ; but this cynicism can be softened down, perhaps, by a little sympathetic understanding, and something to Oxford's eternal credit may appear between the lines. For the Oxford of imagination and yet of fact does exist, with a life essentially its own, abiding in interest and variety and power, of which, right through, an innate idealism is the strongest feature, influencing alike the work-room, the river, or the field. It is difficult to explain : but so, among other achievements, Oxford becomes a nursery of statesmen.

Now, although there were, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, many Oxfords ; and though there are to-day many more ; it is not difficult to discover what has always been the most important of those characteristics which make of University life a thing apart. It is free discussion.

This characteristic expands itself into a function. Whether you take your impression from representative books—the report, for instance, of the latest Royal Commission will serve—or from reality, the contest of mind against mind is the greatest benefit which a University can confer. Other contacts are unquestionably beneficial too. Sport and many other things beside learning supply great advantages. But knowledge surely comes to its highest through comparison, through conflict. The freshman discovers this as soon as he comes into residence. Here nothing is final. Here nothing is ready-made. Convictions can be kept open. Observers from other lands have often perceived these essential truths when visiting Oxford, not without envy : seeing new thoughts continually emerging, unexpected reputations being made. A virtual, yet virtuous strife in which all personal forces of men, all impersonal forces of books, may engage : this is the background. In the foreground we have leisure and the assurance of a pleasant, little-complicated life. Nature is quite ready to take advantage of the benefits thus favourably framed. Especially the nature of the Englishman. Behind formal systems, above teachers or examiners, the interplay of fresh discussion holds an important place in every country : but of a value more highly esteemed amongst ourselves than elsewhere. Representative institutions control our lives : none of them exists which is not concerned with this particular freedom. In learning-time, then, let us try to understand and manage such things, if only for the sake of a future which promises developments delightful to forecast. Thus, to focus these interests of free discussion—to give them name, local habitation, permanency—became the object of several enterprising spirits who succeeded in founding a debating society for the whole of the University of Oxford, in the spring of the year 1823. This is the formal, the official date, but it is a date which " looks before and after." Especially before. The new entity, to be known within a very short time and ever since, almost affectionately, as " The Oxford Union," did not spring spontaneously, as a child of promise might well have done, from thigh of Jove or womb of Minerva. Thoughts of such a unity had been in the air for some years, and the fine idealistic view persisted that this should be unity through diversity. As for a title—" The United Debating Society " at first sufficed. Originally, debate alone seemed reason enough for founding an institution which should reach the heights. It was meant to grow. In the minds of the pioneers were many elevating and expansive ideas. There was the love of books. There were the claims of philosophy. History might enter in. Whatever Oxford taught or encouraged might provide its special contribution. Politics allured, not theoretically, but as a likely occupation for one's whole existence. Emancipation from boyhood meant entering manhood at a time when mere striplings had laboured intelligently in public fields. With such examples, everything pointed upwards, as though the motto had been : " *Altiora in votis*." Incidentally, however, it should be noted that ambition of a narrow, definite kind still affixed itself to the prerogatives of a ruling class. By encouraging this movement towards a greater freedom, young Oxford had no conception of freedom in any democratic sense. It was by no means intended, in these early days, to unloose the chains of a traditional exclusiveness. The idea of a general club had not yet dawned.

And yet, as an antidote to this conception of privilege, reckoning had to be made with the gregariousness and adaptability of young men as such. Some few already thought that genius, not merely the *genius loci*, might assert itself, or be developed from capacity or from the give-and-take of disputation enlivened by the play of fancy. Oxford had always cherished humour and the sense of fun. High spirits could be relied on to prevent intellectual endeavour from degenerating into pretentiousness or dullness. Unity could come from, or be stimulated by, the understanding of differences.

Even conversions were possible. Add to these points the importance of good manners, and the plans of the founders might be considered, as in fact they have proved, of far-reaching value—even to the nation.

Here the state of the University must be considered.

A long decadence may be said to have been brought to an end during this first quarter of the nineteenth century. Neither decadence, nor the friction, age-long in durance, which raged through Oxford with every kind of fluctuation, over the liberties of individuals or academic bodies, need detain us. Slackness and mismanagement had gone out of fashion. Dawn of a new era entailed changes. The University had decided to introduce method into the studies chiefly pursued, by setting up regulated rivalries with honours attached, intellectual tests with some reality about them. To such reforms youth responded, sometimes, in a fashion which set up opposition in conservative minds. Freedom of thought might be all very well in circles where wigs were still worn; in intellectual speculation, there could hardly be any length to which privileged members of the University, ripe in age, might not attempt to go: though this, of course, the charter of free-thinking, could only be exhibited with the oak "sported" and the windows shut. To the Courts of the University men could still be delated for heresy. Freedom of thought, indeed, must not too readily develop into freedom of speech. And if this were so amongst the aged, what could adolescence do, and more, what could adolescence expect, once becoming restive? To these critics some proposals were so preposterous, that the sacred laws determining pupillage, vigilantly cherished, must forthwith be vindicated by authority. But this resolution was now to be challenged. Unity would turn out to be force.

Why not, in defiance of prejudice and penalties, run the proposed society on lines which ordinary reason would prove to be unassailable? The nation, it was urged, set the example by parliamentary forms. Here would be combined all the advantages which an impressionable period of life affords: companionship, friendly inequality, above all, the setting of Oxford, which seldom fails to implant an intense affection in her sons. Even those least satisfied with academic life or apparently unfitted for it, absorb Oxford tendencies with their cloistered rooms: gradually allowing, in the majority of cases, the fascinating mediævalism of stocks and stones to touch their souls. These our pioneers, therefore, rash and presumptuous though they appeared to many of their contemporaries, challenged authority modestly and cautiously enough. And because they were often rebuffed, it can truly be said that the institution which they founded was begotten by Enthusiasm out of Limitation.

Enthusiasm could rely on friendly support. Long before 1823, the feeling that a society, united for discussion and free inquiry, should exist, had resolved itself into gatherings and even into preliminary undertakings, one man supporting another in the efforts made. Many were those who felt that the societies of the individual colleges lacked width of view, though they possessed a wonderful inner patriotism and their own admirable cohesion. These men looked to the University outside with a side-glance, of course, in the direction of the political world. The greater prominence of some individual colleges ensured respect for any men who would lead a new hope. Traditions of certain schools were important. In a few of these there existed prestige, and something more.

In these few there dwelt a remarkable public spirit, a power of light and leading, something peculiarly English, vigorous, adaptable, due partly to social stability, partly to the "grand, old, fortifying classical curriculum." Some individuals therefore came up to Oxford fully fledged: often their home traditions as much as their school traditions helped them. To proceed to Oxford from Winchester or Eton, for instance, was like stepping from the nave of a cathedral up into the choir, an easy transition. It meant entrance on University life with great advantages. Looking back a little, we can see two men doing this very thing, one a Wykehamist, the other an Etonian; the first a member of New College, the second of Brasenose. These two made a definite mark in later life, Augustus Hare, as part-author (with Julius, his brother) of "Guesses at Truth"; Henry Hart Milman living to win high honour and even fame as Dean of St. Paul's. To these men, above all, accepting the authority of one of our Victorian Lord Chancellors, the credit of inspiring the Union movement in Oxford is due.

As early as 1812, Hare had sown the seeds of widening dialectical effort in a society—the "Attic" Society. Punsters declared that the name was justified by the garret-like apartments in which the members met. For these efforts Augustus Hare lived during his Oxford days, rather as Sarah Battle lived for whist. Nothing, to him, seemed quite as important as the "rigour" of this particular game. His temper was always generous, his altruism unusual. The privileges of "founders' kin" for instance, he exposed in a way which brought upon him the wrath of the New College authorities, and throughout life he was absorbed by thoughts of freedom and fair play. The cause of free speech made moving spirits of himself and his friends. "While they were musing, the fire kindled."

But, though the fire might be kindled, it could only be kept alight with difficulty. Indeed, when Oxford seemed difficult to rouse, Hare's attention had been drawn to Cambridge. Between 1812 and 1815, and again between 1815 and 1821, spasmodic efforts towards establishing their semi-political project were continued by groups of men whose eyes were on parliamentary forms and principles, in the two friendly and rival seats of learning.

All concerned had to reckon with something beyond possible internal ridicule. Indifference to mere talkers is natural enough: but there is a good deal to be said for experiments in clear speaking, since it is on this, as on clear thinking, that sensible action, collective or individual, largely depends. On this ground, the policy of opportunity for public debate scarcely demands an apologist. But, for debating, the period following Waterloo was somewhat inauspicious. Nevertheless, in spite of discouragement, Cambridge had set the pace, and Oxford really desired to follow suit. Till this was done, a gap remained unfilled.

Persistently the idea that open discussion, of urgent political questions especially, should be attainable in a University, held its own against all checks. Hare went to Cambridge to study the position there. He came back to Oxford very favourably impressed.

The most he could do was to hand on the torch. In his own University he could count on many friends. In Kent of Trinity, in Comyn of St. John's, he found staunch allies. Original members of the " Attic " had been seven in number. Gradually others were added. College influences in Oxford vary greatly from generation to generation. Recalling, no doubt, the once-established pre-eminence of Pembroke as " a nest of singing birds," Trinity now gave itself more particularly to the cultivation of rhetoric. There were Irishmen, too, in the University, ready to develop their natural gifts. Amongst these, two individuals, Roe and Singleton, may be specially mentioned as helping to roll things along. As Hare's biographer points out : " A miniature Parliament was the Elysium in which his imagination and that of his friends developed." Here were the beginnings of the Union.

To Randall, another Trinity man, subsequently an archdeacon, Hare now looked for further counsel and support : Streatfield, Everth, Smith, all Trinity men, assisted the congenial scheme. It is noticeable, of course, that many of these men were on their way to Holy Orders, and the institution still to arise from these beginnings would be bound to attract a definite type of thinker, so long at least as the University should retain its complexion of Anglicanism—with all that this implies in the ascendant. Subsequent history lends, in this connexion, a special interest to these evolutionary plans. A limit had to be set, whatever might happen, to religious bias. But ecclesiastical politics, of a sort, could receive attention, and practice in speaking is needed for the clerical profession. Thus the sphere became widened beyond that of ordinary secular activity.

Amongst the next befrienders of the movement, we find the name of a man very famous in Oxford annals: Thomas Arnold of Corpus, afterwards headmaster of Rugby. Concurrently, Milman had become prime mover in a young graduates' club, which seemed, as such, to exclude those of the generation below: but he and his friends encouraged their contemporaries, hoping to secure the necessary cohesion: thus forging a fraternal bond between men who were still up at Oxford and others, like Arnold, who were already taking up some active educational work. So, throughout the whole period from 1815 to 1823, the flickering flame was tended. A belief grew up that the traditions of the "Attic" were only dormant. The society, in fact, lingered on in London, encouraging Oxford to move forward, like Cambridge, as soon as there should be a favourable wind. For the Cambridge Union Society of 1815 had actually attained, within two years of its foundation, the distinction of a decree issued by the Vice-Chancellor, abolishing the debates on the ground that they interfered with study.

This issue joined, it had to be fought out. By 1821 the prohibition was withdrawn, grudgingly, yet of necessity. Everywhere the truth was being established that open discussion is the greatest of safety-valves: and so, in one case at least, it had been admitted that it simply stultifies a place of learning to forbid inquiry, however inexperienced the inquirers may happen to be.

So, by the encouragement of this near parallel, enthusiasm rose up again in Oxford, the University, in some respects, growing younger and wiser. Its fossilisms, its incrustations, let all admit, might well have a sentimental appeal. The most ardent reformer could not want to scatter them all. But here and there, among the more enlightened graduates, were a few conscious of the need to be met. Ready to throw closed avenues open, they offered to aspirants from below a helping hand. No gulf was fixed between public-school-men of a few years' difference in standing. Here, of course, the feeling of comradeship was of value, and one circle almost imperceptibly merged into another.

Accordingly some twenty-five Oxford men, most of whom had matriculated as early as 1820, having inherited the plans and hopes so far thwarted, gathered together at the end of 1822, and started to prepare a code of rules which should govern the new society. These rules show a clear concession to the prejudices then prevailing. The subjects to be discussed were to include " the Historical previous to the present century, and the Philosophical exclusive of Religion." The rules are still interesting, because they constitute the nucleus of government for the Union in the days of its expansion, and they are redolent, too, of the charm of a bygone day. So by March, 1823, all was ready. By April the debates were in full swing. Winchester, through Hare, had duly made her contribution of antenatal enthusiasm. A stronger hand was now to be played by Eton. Trinity had sown, Christ Church seemed willing to foster the seedlings. Oriel had a good deal to say, and Balliol came deliberately forward.

In rooms at Christ Church the first meeting of the nascent society was held, the date being April 5, 1823. Vesey of the House, afterwards the third Viscount de Vesci, raised this question :

> " Was the revolution under Cromwell to be attributed to the tyrannical conduct of Charles, or to the democratic spirit of the times ? "

On this occasion Maclean of Balliol, later a member of the House of Commons, presided; and it was arranged that the chairmanship should be changed every fortnight. Under the motion as worded, lay, though unexpressed so far, the ulterior political aims towards which the minds of the founders of the society were already directed. As it was, the mention of "democracy" in the very first motion seems at this day significant. It hints at the radical changes coming into English life. And it is obvious, underneath these tentative forms and rather timid suggestions, that Oxford youth was seeking to understand and to cope with the restlessness of the world it would have to live in.

In the personalities of these earliest debaters, there is something else which strikes attention, as we read the testimonies still extant. The tone is one of privilege. Vesey is supported by Anson, son of the Earl of Lichfield, and by Vane, later Duke of Cleveland. Squireens and scions of other notable families swell the list: we note a Prevost, a Des Voeux, a Colquhoun. Four colleges only are actually represented in the discussion: University, Christ Church, Brasenose, Oriel. The president is not allowed to speak, but he is given a casting vote. The society is limited in membership. Thus, with all the enthusiasm, a certain exclusiveness, thoroughly thought out, partly social, partly intellectual, prevails. A bidding has been made to the pick of the University for support. An absolutely new departure has been made in Oxford life; in time it will embrace as much of the University as will have it.

Prospectively, of course, every man concerned was assisting a public-spirited effort which had an individual application. To learn confidence is one of the greatest assets a man can obtain for success in life; to acquire it is of advantage in any profession. The profession largely to be practised by these anticipators of a wider future would be to a great extent that of the man of means and position:

this fact gives a strong colour to everything connected with these initial proceedings. But other influences were at work to break this narrowness down. Cleavages in thought on political questions were realities both intellectually and socially. In each respect, Oxford represented a distinct compartment of the national life. The political novels of the succeeding age are specially strong on this point for they often give adequate pictures of political feeling which ran universally high. Higher they were to rise, throughout the Victorian age and after: Oxford taking a side and swelling the tide, even with passion, as though the University possessed a distinctive political soul, which could introduce at need a certain ethical and educational force, not wholly to be despised. Academic authority had often extolled the practice of authority as the highest of the arts. " From the days of Pericles and Demosthenes to those of Cicero, from the days of Cicero to those of Pitt and Canning . . . the power of speech has ruled . . . " as a Union orator pointed out in Oxford on a certain auspicious occasion, scholars and statesmen and divines genially applauding.

With such ideas in mind, the scope of those who now brought oratorical practice to a definite test manifestly extends in promise by performance. All the preliminary difficulties had been negotiated: the first meeting had been successfully held. A vote favourable to King Charles the First, though not necessarily adverse to Cromwell, had been taken. The subject was to be thrashed out again on other occasions, in different forms; it stands out as typical of the time, the place, the conditions. A little later, under the form of a judgment of the misgovernment of Charles the Second, as being "a greater evil than the usurpation of Cromwell," many prejudices could find vent, many sidelights on the theory or practice of government could be thrown. Doubtless the cleavage between living political parties often determined the issue hidden under these historical veils. Whilst a certain remoteness is attached to most of the ten debates which constitute the record for the year 1823, the London Press was soon to take notice of what Oxford was coming to—as though young Oxford counted for something. Meanwhile, the personalities of Queen Elizabeth (whose character was barely saved by a vote), of Mary Queen of Scots, of John Wilkes, were discussed with considerable animation. Gradually the net was spread wider. From persons to principles it is only a step. The repeal of the Test Acts; the interference of Britain with revolutionary France; the legality of public assemblies; were matters which could set those in authority talking, for they sailed near the dangerous wind of perilous convictions, and it might soon be divined that the disguise of the historical and philosophical would wear out. When Wildman of Christ Church, at the second meeting of the society, on the 12th of April, 1823, inquired:

> "Has America been benefited by its intercourse with Europe?"

the range of interest had been manifestly increased. When caution again intervened, the organizers reverted to the perennial problem of the Stuarts, which for yet another generation possessed an appeal, a fascination for Oxford minds: oddly enough, this very subject was soon to be the cause of some notoriety for the debaters.

In the American discussion, one name beyond Wildman's stands out. It is that of Richard Durnford of Magdalen, a man who kept loyally in touch with these things for the rest of his long life. He may be reckoned as one who did much to regulate the procedure which secured effective organization. By this, membership was only permitted after residence of one term; election was by ballot—one black ball in five to exclude. Each man had to be proposed and seconded, and a subscription of two guineas was payable the same evening. The limited membership of eighty could be increased by the election of graduates; a privilege not dis-esteemed, and one which helped the society a good deal; to be developed, in time, into the vast life-membership which occasionally displays a corporate sensibility of its own. The rules provided also for the hire of benches, for the provision of refreshments: and a suitable abode, it was suggested, the committee must try to procure. Anything that might arise in connexion with these arrangements was to be settled by vote, on the instructions of the committee, before each debate: which provisions ensured the kind, if somewhat formal direction, of a benevolent oligarchy. Herein, naturally, lay some seeds of possible dissension: but the curtain had been rung up without a hitch and the play had begun. Donald Maclean of Balliol, for the time being, was the first stage-manager: but his functions were regularly transferable throughout the ranks of the select. No thought of touting for members is visible—rather the reverse—and there is a clear conception, in the wording of the rules, not only of the dignity attaching to office, but also of expansion and permanence. And the interest of personalities emerged as soon as the debates began.

The eight men who during the year 1823 occupied in turn the presidential chair were Maclean, Ashley, Colquhoun, Wilson Patten, Powys, Bramston, Ingestre and Durnford. All these, save Bramston, who became a dean, were on the way either to the House of Commons or the House of Lords. There might be point, indeed, in applying to these individual disputants that encouraging proverb which allots a field-marshal's baton to the private's knapsack, more especially because one of the most notable had a shepherd's crook in his pocket: and he was soon to be followed by others who would make an equal or greater mark in the land. Durnford himself, as it happened, remained in Oxford a year or two longer than most of those who had attended the launching of the project; and he kept up his interest for another seventy years. To his vivid memory much is due, for he would dwell with delight, not wholly uncritical, on these early beginnings.

"We were a feeble people," he would declare. "We had to meet in a low-browed room at Christ Church to begin with. We were hunted from college to college, taking refuge here and there. Accommodation for our members was only provided by the hospitality of friends."

But friends were many, and encouragement increased. Eton alone would see to that. Among these Etonians, natural leaders in their colleges, Durnford had come up to the University with a reputation which the companionship of like-minded men naturally tended to enhance. His father would have sent him to Winchester, but the idea did not happen to fit in with the views of the headmaster, Dr. Goddard, and so young Richard had passed into Eton with a scholarship. Such things went begging in the public schools of those days, a condition of things which time has reversed. Eton, however, even then, was nearer than any other school to the active life of the country, and could bring its own methods and manners into Oxford with valuable results. Politically, too, such a name as that of George Canning supplied a zest, inspired a tradition. That tradition is honoured to-day in Oxford by the still flourishing Canning Club. The sentiment which it embodies is keen at Eton still.

With such traditions alive, advance could now be made, and was duly made by Durnford and his friends. But extraneous difficulties were taking inward shape. The year 1823 saw the Master of Pembroke, Dr. Hall, in office as Vice-Chancellor, the first of his college, as he proudly averred, to bear the *fasces* of authority. Nearing the term of his official dignity, and gliding through his work with easy-going amiability, he did nothing definite to encourage, little to suppress; but it chanced in 1824 that he was followed by an individual more disposed to interfere with any unusual outburst of activity on the part of aspiring undergraduates. This was the redoubtable Dr. Jenkyns of Balliol, the bias of whose mind it was " to overdo rather than to leave anything undone." He (with his attendant proctors) could claim enforcement merely of a reasonable discipline and the fostering of study, though it is fairly obvious, since half a dozen discussions during a term would fill the programme, that no very great amount of time would be spent in this pursuit. Suppression of free inquiry, of course, was really aimed at, and Dr. Jenkyns in the reign of George the Fourth was asserting what with amusing variations his successors sometimes tried to do in the days of Victoria or Edward or of George the Fifth : which later period affords a parallel to the days now under discussion. Critical days for all classes invariably follow in the wake of great wars. If debating sometimes seems superfluous, the feeling still supervenes that open discussion may help on a happier age. With a little opposition in the background, and personal rivalries ripening, a certain liveliness was promised, sufficient at least to awaken the vigorous feeling which animates political movements. These things considered, difficulties could very cheerfully be faced, though memories of the period show other disintegrating forces at work. Jealousies between college and college had to be reckoned with. It became a question, in fact, as time rolled on, whether office held in the society might not mean a mere system of favouritism, a perpetuation of the influence of one clique or another. There were, indeed, means by which this sort of thing could be counteracted. There was plenty of goodwill. The desire for unity was genuine. New proposals were often formulated. Fresh members had ideas of their own. Books began to be collected.

With an average of fifty men putting in an appearance, the accommodation provided by private college rooms soon began to be strained, in spite of the fact that some of the debates were conducted without great energy. For instance, the last meeting in 1823, which should have shown decisively either that a nation had—or had not—a right to interfere with the policy of another, was dissolved. The necessary quorum of twenty had failed.

Throughout these vicissitudes perseverance dominated the position. And there was a good deal to think of. In February, 1824, an "extraordinary" meeting proved how perplexing the one matter of habitation had become. Plans were just settled when the proctors caused it to be known that they would interrupt the proceedings.

This time discretion ruled the disturbers of the official peace of mind. Egerton Vernon, as president, had called the meeting. On the motion of Marshall of Magdalen, one who frequently took the lead, H. B. Baring, of Christ Church, who rose in later life to be a Lord of the Treasury, was voted to the chair. Then, on the motion of H. H. Dodgson, a member of Baring's college, the house proceeded to discuss the cancellation of the arrangements made with the masonic body, on whose premises this meeting was held.

Dodgson proposed to abandon the public scheme, and to meet next day (Sunday) at New College. Vernon, Mahon (later Earl Stanhope), Drummond, Irby, and others supported this motion; R. I. Wilberforce of Oriel, Wrangham, Marshall and Durnford were against it. The discreeter party won the vote, which meant that the society must pursue its fugitive methods from college to college for some time longer.

The name of Wilberforce, thus introduced, is a reminder that new strength was soon to accrue by the election of a more famous brother, not only to the society, but to the committee also. As early as the month of May, 1824, Samuel Wilberforce of Oriel was dealing with the one subject which constantly encompassed interest: the dethronement of Charles the First. His name opens a new chapter. The proceedings roused a London paper, *John Bull*, to lash out with indignant fervour against these young iconoclasts of Oxford, and so the society listened for the first time to public criticism.

CHAPTER II

FROM 1825 TO 1829: THE UNION ENLARGES ITS FIELD OF ACTION: THE GREAT SHELLEY DEBATE

IF a clique controlled the earliest affairs of the Oxford Debating Society, at least it could be called a distinguished clique. However distinguished: in youth, however happy: the individuals composing it could not all or always succeed. It is a trite reflection on the instability of the human lot that some of these, fortunate enough in position or temperament, could never in the nature of things achieve what friends too confidently expected of them. Anson, for instance, died at Aleppo in his twenty-fourth year. Ingestre, heir to the Shrewsbury title, was no older at the time of his accidental death, which also took place abroad. Maclean lived on to make a name in politics, more especially in connexion with Oxford; but in time he fell out, defeated in the race, a victim of financial and other disasters. It needs no Latin tag to emphasize the pity of such things. But they have to be reckoned with.

In this same group, many hoped to win laurels. They hoped with reason. Amongst these was J. A. Stuart-Wortley of Christ Church, a scion of the house of Wharncliffe. He was typical of his time. He reached high legal office in his day as one of Queen Victoria's solicitors-general. To him it fell to preside, in the month of June, 1824, at a meeting called to consider the strictures of *John Bull*. That periodical, which often fluttered the academic dovecotes, now did its best to turn a breeze into a tempest. Our ambitious little society assumed the formal defensive. As things began, so they continued. For this was forerunner of many an animated scene. Thus were the possibilities of "private business" tested. Such business might arise out of anything. Ingenuity in questioning, readiness for repartee, would test a man's wits in this mimic warfare. Sometimes personal feeling reacted on political excitement, and then the society as a whole would decide to let itself go as though some vital principle were at stake.

In the columns of *John Bull* all sorts of affairs were freely, pungently dealt with. Faded now and defunct, the pages of this newspaper are still by no means destitute of life. Against the dignity of great journalistic rivals it contended, with an impudence occasionally successful. In its columns, the attitude adopted towards every open question is that of the man of the world who cannot free himself from a certain cynicism, and yet, at times, the dictionary is ransacked for terms which shall express sufficient concern for public welfare, private morality, or social progress. This within constitutional limits, of course: for Whigs and would-be reformers of all kinds are generally in the pillory. Theodore Hook, the conductor, was at this time doing very well out of the paper. He was an adventurer of different kinds all rolled into one. Earlier in the year an agitation had arisen concerning Christ Church in which the doings of a man named Baillie were involved, but more, this had caused aspersions on the college itself to be spread far and wide. Alleged rowdyism and drunkenness were the cause. This stirred the publicist's heart to the depths. An attack had been launched against the "usages of the first college in the empire: perhaps in the universe." *John Bull* held the balance fairly as between Baillie and the authorities. It went out of its way to defend the college, treating the episode as an unfortunate, isolated instance, and holding up the Christ Church standard of gentlemanly conduct against all possible detractors. This, looking backwards or forwards, will strike the average Oxford man, whatever his foibles or his sympathies, as generous enough.

But it was to Oxford's sober politicians that attention was now particularly diverted, with the same ostensible fairness, and with the superior moral and mental attitude no less definitely assumed. Here the name of Walter Farquhar Hook may still evoke the appreciation which Oxford always loves to render to her abler men. A " House " man of some influence, he belonged to that senior group which acted as invigilators of the society's proceedings. His vigour, later on, made him an outstanding figure as a churchman, for he followed a course of great originality at Leeds as vicar, at Chichester as dean. Theodore Hook, the editor, was the young enthusiast's uncle, and now the two made use of an obvious opportunity. It was easy to create prejudice. A scratch of the pen would inflict a wound. Uncle Theodore was ready with salt to be rubbed in. The thought thus given to Wrangham's time-honoured motion—with its perennial concern for the head of King Charles—may be taken as complimentary to the men, as well as to the place concerned. Such a discussion dealt with a tragedy then not fully two centuries old : in Oxford, an historical fact still emitting light and heat. It provided parallels. It touched lively issues of this germinating time. Therefore it afforded opportunity for genuine concern or affected alarm. A watchful eye had to be kept on such phenomena.

The words published were full of vehement reproach :

> " The most active and virulent of disputants in favour of the deposition of Charles the First were the two sons of Mr. Wilberforce ! ! ! And one of them—the more indiscreet, perhaps, than the other, or untutored in a higher quarter—let out the secrets of the prison-house at Clapham or Kensington, by making a direct attack on the Established Church."

This diatribe was taken to heart. Resentment quickly found an outlet. A special summons brought the society together. The report had less than no authority. At this stage nobody sought the London limelight. Though freedom of utterance had been aimed at, freedom of comment did not necessarily follow. Certain amenities of privacy were still sedulously preserved. . . . Someone, surely, had been guilty of a breach of confidence. . . . As to the statements made, these would be denied. . . .

So, in a speech of sensitive sincerity, the Honourable Harry Vane, stirred by college loyalty no less than by conviction—for like the Wilberforces he belonged to Oriel—set forth views which were warmly received and applauded. He demanded that a vote of "regret and indignation" should be passed. The society responded to a man. Heat and fury attacked the infringement of privilege. Then a more personal aspect of the case presented itself. The members accused had been misreported. They were formally absolved. Finally, the assertions of *John Bull* were unequivocally condemned, on the ground that the misleading statements were "of such a nature as to prejudice the Society in the eyes of the Authorities of this University."

Authority might well have been pleased, for the proceedings, the wording of the resolution too, showed a wholesome fear. Those who were most anxious for the society's future were clearly actuated by an impulse of that kind. To use a phrase of Richard Durnford's, he and his friends had merely been trying to make sure of "the same privilege as they had enjoyed at Eton." Even this schoolboy freedom was being frowned on at Oxford. The society was only meeting on sufferance. All were subject to qualms of uncertainty. Discretion was advisable, and in this quality the leaders were not deficient. Their protest, moreover, had a result: for *John Bull* itself did not return to the charge. The episode was closed. They would have been horrified at the idea, but the members had obtained an advertisement.

Meanwhile, the society looked outwards as well as inwards, and admitted the sister-society at Cambridge to reciprocal privileges on February 25, 1825. Every effort was now made to introduce fresh motions. Torrens, Trower, Courtenay, Gresley and Durnford brought variety into the topics considered, and all of them were men with something sensible to say. Order became systematic. The vice-president's office was soon merged in that of secretary, and though the minutes are mere outlines, these have preserved the views of individuals and display in this relation both character and consistency. The separation between Conservatism and Liberalism grew gradually more defined. Men at Oxford were preparing for the era of the Reform Bill: change—and to some minds change meant decay—was in the air. Others, more fluid, were ready to experiment, to take up new causes, forlorn hopes; naturally, of course, many a speech was made which did not represent the convictions of the speaker. The value of practice in debate could hardly be doubted: if a man had the root of the matter in him, he might take up one side or the other, just as a barrister takes up a brief, especially in the many cases where there is room for doubt, for shades or alternatives of conviction. Knowledge, of course, limited everywhere, had the special limitation here of immaturity. Some academic critics condemned the whole business of debate as puerile and absurd. These, and their successors in the arts of critical severity, were answered by the facts which retrospect now begins to make clear. There was a spirit about these young men of 1823 and onwards which time has amply vindicated. Even those who were at first against them gradually withdrew their opposition. To the temerity shown there were always certain safeguards. A young man will often find the true answer to a vexed question where an old one fails. Wild assertions, framed by ignorance, have always obtained, in Oxford, where sound learning is at least accessible, an astonishingly quick corrective; and, as a general rule, if a subject reaches discussion, the average knowledge concerning it is decidedly high. To approach things disputable amongst one's fellows and equals requires a certain nerve. So with these men: intention and fulfilment may henceforward be seen in due proportion.

Strength was brought to the immature body before the end of 1824 by men bearing names which still have an Oxford ring about them. A Phillimore, a Vernon-Harcourt, another Talbot—following Ingestre—took part in the proceedings. Charles Murray of Oriel appeared, on his way to wider adventures; here, like J. C. Colquhoun and H. H. Dodgson, he laid the foundations of high public success. The fields of achievement for these three lay far apart in diplomacy, in politics, and at the bar. And so it was with others. As time went on, subjects for debate asserted general principles as much as current opinions. Thus it came to be agreed that there had been "a decay of eloquence in modern times," but this was "not to be attributed to the increase of knowledge." The decay, obviously, was not a thing to which eager subscription could be given. Rather the contrary. The society, as such, thought of its arrest as the great objective, desiring to put clarity and cogency of speech in its proper place—as part, perhaps the highest part, of education.

Here, as an indication of the attitude long maintained in Oxford and elsewhere, the wording of a motion proposed by Donald Maclean on November 20, 1824, is instructive; for in dealing with education, we are confronted as a matter of course with the complete cleavage in society between rich and poor when (not illiberally) it is questioned what education, if any, is necessary for "the lower orders." Such terminology amuses rather than offends. It was certainly a good thing to bring these things to the notice of men in the formative stage of their existence. And in spite of some superiority, every discussion of this kind tended to bring into prominence the surge of rising forces. The adherence of a man like Samuel Wilberforce to the unconventional took varying forms: he never had any difficulty in expressing himself: from early days he was a marked man. He had been attacked by *John Bull.* Soon he was to take a hand against abuses, borough-mongering for instance. He did not persuade the House, which decided that "the system of borough patronage was perfectly consistent with the spirit of the constitution." But in others besides himself the same sort of leaven was working. He it was, too, who tried to secure a vote against the death-penalty for forgery, whilst others showed themselves indignant against the merciless code of punishment then in vogue for soldiers, sailors and slaves. From the year 1824 onwards, indeed, every effort was made to gain a fair hearing for emancipative views: the philosophical, the historical, receded: much that received careful consideration deserves particular notice for the sense of humanitarianism which pervades the record, and for the feeling that all was not well, either with Oxford or with the world. Nevertheless, a fascinating social prejudice, a rare exclusiveness remained. From this in due course the *odium theologicum* should have been subtracted. In truth, this very thing, expressly debarred by the rules, entered by the door of ecclesiastical preferences, if that expression be not too strong: if, from the point of view of those then active, the term "religious convictions" might not be fairer. In any case the permeating influence was such that disturbance of calm, and a consequent check to the society, must be traced to it. Happily the proceedings which ensued were free from dullness. A certain thrill belonged to the proposal—"That religious differences are not a just ground for exclusion from political rights."

This motion was raised by Trower and opposed by Durnford on March 5, 1825. An amendment declaring "that a difference in religion should not expose any individual to persecution or insult, but may yet justly incapacitate him from possessing extended authority"—was proposed by Lord Mahon. Neither motion nor amendment ever reached a division. It was not enough for members to repudiate one another's views. The subject was provocative. The string of words and adjectives was mischievous. Religion, persecution, insult, incapacity! Some ten members spoke with varying degrees of heat. Then Culling Eardley (known at the time as C. E. Smith of Oriel) created a scene; a regular row. Nobody could be heard. The meeting was formally adjourned. The members dispersed in confusion: a foretaste of the confusion to come, which was nearly to dissolve the society altogether. For the rest of the year, however, such chances of bitter dissension were avoided. As an Oxford parodist has written: "Even the heavenliest poet Sinks somewhere safe to prose." In other words: exchange polemical religion for politics of the past and you may secure comparative peace. The perfervid elements, for some time to come, were reduced to consider such themes as the problems of Irish government, then relatively tepid and historically almost cool, or the conduct of the Duke of Cumberland towards the Scotch in 1746.

It is noticeable that throughout these early months the society was frequently subject to these fits of nervousness. Whilst adjournment over religious disabilities could be taken as evidence of earnestness in a cause, debates without earnestness of some kind were liable to degenerate into feeble discussions, feebly supported, and on such ground, infertile of good, the casual enemy was ready enough to sow tares. "Rags" in any University are easily started, and in many ways. But Oxford also knows many ways of suppressing them. It became plain, and plainest of all to the clear-sighted—these including some of the best elements—that to suppress wanton or childish disturbance would need some special measures. This determination took sudden shape when the society was well advanced in the third year from its inception. It had become sick of stupid interruptions. The rules, so far, included no power to fine. So, as a measure which should lead to others, and on the motion of Wrangham of Brasenose, in later life a leading barrister, a motion to extinguish the society was carried. For the space of some forty-eight hours dissolution was a refuge sought and found. " Finality," however, to use the expression of a famous political orator, " is a discredited word." The society, in fact, was only " shamming dead."

A positive identity, both of body and spirit, survived the decision arrived at. On paper, there was death. In fact, there was life. What the written oracles disclose is a simple protective measure. Enlightened historians of our day often look boldly to the spirit when the letter offers nothing but doubts ; lawyers must compare many interacting circumstances before they can commit themselves to the positive statement or the superlative decision ; with scientists we shall be safer to range ourselves on the whole. A man's body changes, but he preserves his identity. Here, suspended animation endured so short a time that no miracle has to be claimed. The society, crushed on Saturday the 3rd of December, 1825, met again on Monday the 5th, freed from its turbulent, " boyish " interrupters, dropping only its more cumbersome title in favour of that of the " Oxford Union Society " and carrying with it, as the guerdon of better days, those books and benches which were almost as necessary for material existence as the continued fidelity of founders and friends. Though all this was of happy augury, a fatalistic impression as to what happened prevailed in Oxford itself. The *Oxford Herald* of December 12, 1825, announced :

> *" On Saturday last died, of a deep decline, the Oxford United Debating Society ! "*

They were fond of notes of exclamation in those days. As in the Wilberforce affair, this fondness had a special meaning. Some wanted the society to disappear altogether. A sinister wish was father to a sepulchral thought. But, when that vigilant graduate-esquire-bedel, coroner of the University, Mr. G. W. Cox of New College, came to set things down in his diary, he surmised—knowing that the Oxford Union was just starting into life—that the corpse on which he was never to sit must be that of some city-body. His logic was somewhat faulty, but resurrection, which would have been nearer the truth, seems hardly to have occurred to him as solving an apparent mystery. To others, especially to those who were busy carrying reorganization forward, the identity of the Union with the original debating-society was never in question. Therefore, as if to set any lingering doubt at rest, steps were taken some time later to stamp with the date 1823 all property which served the governing idea of continuity, and in this way the struggle for recognition and for permanence received a retrospective encouragement.

Determination now rose, to make of the reviving Union a stable success. The new rules differed only from the old in regard to a greater authority for the suppression of disorder, including a fining system. Official opposition was destined soon to be defeated, though the Vice-Chancellor and proctors made some special efforts before reason and a certain ingenuity baffled their interference. They had on one occasion secured the cancellation of an agreement for the renting of the Freemasons' Hall, thus forcing the society back to the cramping necessity of using the more spacious of college-rooms, a charming yet inadequate resource. The last antagonistic effort on the part of authority found Wilson Patten, as acting president, in the chair, and the redoubtable Samuel Wilberforce addressing the meeting. The proctors' messenger demanded a dispersal; each member to betake himself forthwith to his own college. Prompted, it is said, by Marshall of Magdalen, an

Irishman of excellent humour and racy character, this answer was given with the utmost dignity from the presidential chair: "Sir, this House has received the proctors' message, and will send an answer to the summons by an officer of its own." The opposition to the Union, after this, died out, but it was still rather more than two years before the completely peripatetic nature of the society could be changed. In this period, however, the essentials of club-life were continually in the minds of those responsible for management, and as early as February 2nd, 1826, an order was given for the supply of Hansard's Parliamentary Debates from the year 1800: and these volumes are still in the possession of the society, merged in a larger collection.

For some time from 1826 the officers of the Union were kept busy, finding their bearings under conditions the reverse of comfortable. That enforced wandering from college to college, which had become so wearisome, reached its end late in 1828 when the rooms of one Baxter were taken over. This arrangement lasted for less than a term. Early in 1829, Wyatt's Rooms, spacious enough for the immediate purposes of the society, were secured. They occupied a central position in the "High." Here the debates were held. Reading-rooms were provided elsewhere in the same street. Visitors to Wyatt's Rooms to-day may picture them as they were, for they are not greatly altered. Their outline and interior arrangement for some twenty-five years can be recalled by a glance at Cuthbert Bede's drawing, reproduced as a frontispiece to this volume.

The problem of a meeting-place being solved, the society resumed a course still liable to be disturbed, but troubled no longer by fears of what the authorities might do. Some members found it difficult to settle down. Over the surface of the records restless figures hover, with shadowy grievances and complaints. Something less than perfect contentment must be mentioned even in connexion with the most capable.

A Wilberforce would be found resigning on some slender pretext. The unruly and the unreasonable were generally supported by uncompromising partisans. The name of Odell of Christ Church finds honourable place in the list of treasurers; none the less he had to be censured for self-sufficiency and general offensiveness. A bevy of bloods from the "House"—including Lords Ossory, Russell and Boyle—threw up their membership at this time. On the other hand Lord Hastings remained staunch, with a welcome offer of hospitality, whilst Murray, now a Fellow of All Souls, was ready to pour oil on troubled waters and a Twistleton showed the way to peace. Life in the society, of course, could hardly prosper should attendances dwindle or financial support languish. But money could easily be obtained. Even an occasional adverse balance could be rectified without difficulty. So far, expenses incurred had been trivial. The purchase presently of books, maps, lamps and other accessories indicated confidence. If interest in debate flickered, there was still a party ready to advise complete surrender to adversity. On one occasion, in 1828, such a resolution was imposed on the committee. Even gifts received, it was resolved, should be raffled for or returned. The idea was quickly abandoned. In this form it was never again repeated. By the beginning of 1829 these excursions and alarms were over.

Debates in Wyatt's Rooms greatly resembled those which had preceded them. Continuity remained, both of sentiment and control. The reading-room, supplied with works of general reference, bore witness to the assiduity of Hornby of Oriel, Villiers of Merton, and Field of Queen's: men who received, as they deserved, the thanks of the society for all they had done. The presidential chair had been occupied in succession by Durnford, Villiers, Macdonald, Douglas Smith and Tufnell in 1826 and 1827: on their committees, personally nominated, were men like Charles Baring, William Hamilton, Charles Wordsworth, Herman Merivale, Stephen Glynne, all conspicuously successful in after life. It would seem, glancing at this list, that the practice of speaking in these debates definitely increased the gifts of the gifted, and brought out graces of character meet for the leadership of men. Three of those named added to the episcopal strength of their time at Durham, Salisbury and St. Andrews. Merivale attained literary and professional distinction. Glynne's record is inseparable in retrospect from memories of Gladstone, soon to shed a special lustre on the society as a whole.

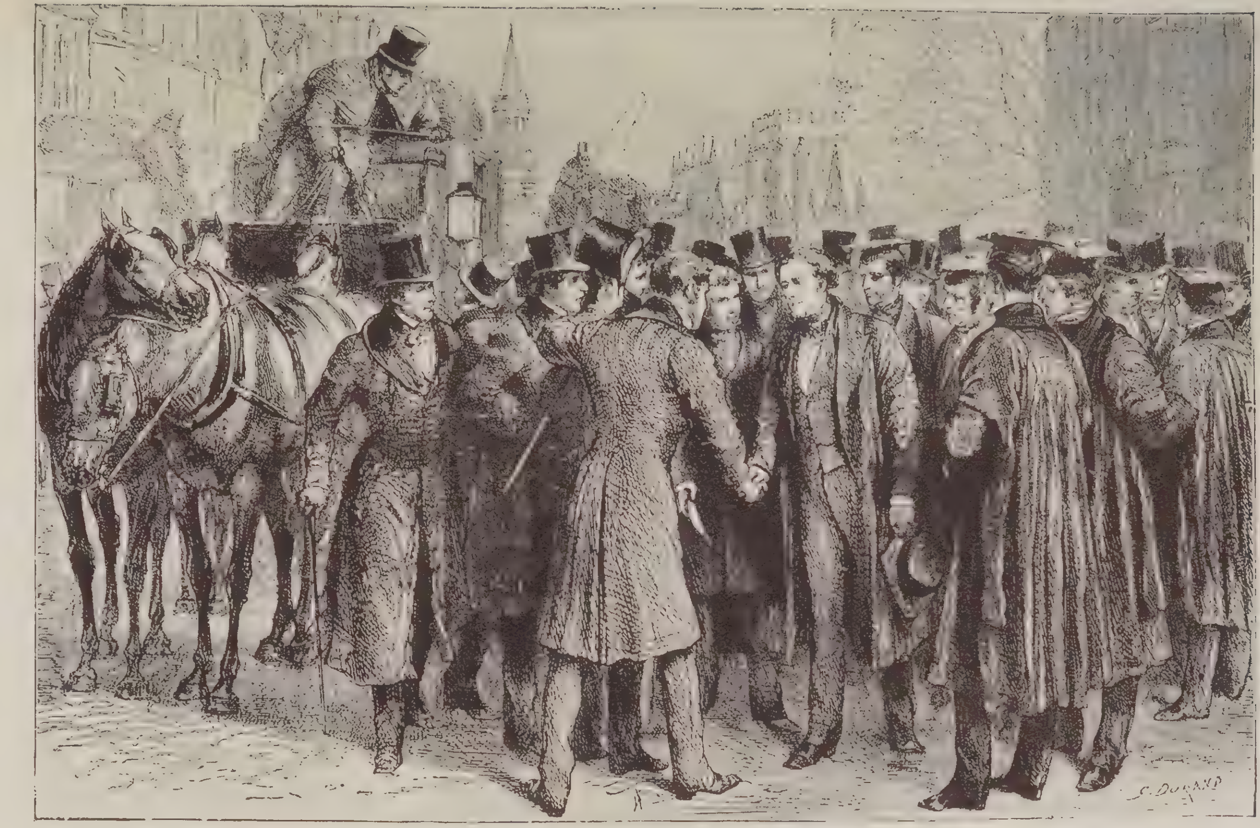
Twenty-four debates were held in Wyatt's Rooms before the end of the year 1829. Charles the First, Cromwell, and Lord Strafford did not escape attention. The defence of the King generally proved successful. On one occasion the genius of Cromwell was declared to be lower than that of Buonaparte. Sixty-one votes were recorded when the execution of Strafford was denounced by a large majority. The Union could be swayed by argument and could show impartiality. Speaking generally, the debates during the presidency of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, and his successors, were well attended. Subjects were sufficiently varied. The abuses of slavery in our own colonies were considered. Monopolies, such as the monopoly of the East India Company, were attacked. Questions affecting education brought a younger Acland to his feet, and on such questions Sir John Hanmer of Christ Church was a frequent speaker. The name of H. E. Manning of Balliol must also be recorded as prominent for a time in serious business. He spoke, for instance, against excessive penalties for crime. He studied different motions, affecting past history or dealing with current affairs. In one keen political debate, when seventy-five votes were recorded, he carried an important amendment. There was charm in the general activity. The appearance of Sidney Herbert of Oriel added to the pleasantness of Thursday evenings, when controversy could show itself both animated and ingenious; whilst the beautiful handwriting of Milnes Gaskell, in which names, dates and figures are permanently recorded, points to a time when Oxford men cared something for form. Men dressed at this epoch in Oxford with some regard for style. Sixty years later, it shocked an eminent contemporary of Gaskell's to see how things could change in this respect; but other differences were bound to come if noblemen should shed the golden tassels to their caps and the gentleman-commoner's gown flutter no longer in the groves. Between the years 1826 and 1829 a keenness to improve the attendance was more than once exemplified by proposals to make such attendance compulsory on the part of the members. Very naturally this perilous course was not embarked on, and by degrees the safer expedient, by which discussions were sensibly enlarged, brought a steady accession of strength. The contributions of Samuel Wilberforce were continued with vigour: nearly always, as Mr. Mozley has recorded, on the Liberal side. His style was his own. Eloquence was the special gift of all the Wilberforces. Samuel spoke, it was once said, like the Ulysses of Homer, "with words flowing fast and soft as flakes of snow from his lips." And reform was in the air. In the earliest days of the great movement for parliamentary change, a small majority was once gained for the proposition that government as conducted was corrupt in practice and imperfect in theory. Thus began the recognition of a new age. But the Union, Conservative in taste, could be swayed very easily in the opposite direction by speakers like Henry Manning, who persuaded his hearers, within the year, in the same assembly, that popular power was already strong enough in the House of Commons. Reaction, in fact, had many champions, and for the amendment, already alluded to, Manning obtained the heaviest vote yet recorded. Not every progressive idea was treated alike. Catholic Emancipation obtained the society's blessing on several occasions. Hereditary privileges carried all before them. The balance swung from side to side. But it was generally felt that a fresh infusion, something different from politics, was greatly needed. It dawned on the few that other intellectual diversions were attainable, that literature had claims. Near the end of 1829, for the first time, a resolution was brought forward which created a fresh interest : one which could not, at the outset, attract : one which stirred the society with conflicting emotions and exercised a potent influence over its future course. Once more the inspiration came from Cambridge, Eton aiding. It came in the form of a challenge to knowledge, as well as to prejudice, and it was issued in the sacred name of poetry itself. With all its loftiness of aim, the proposal was not without its humours. Considerable stimulation was necessary to give effect to it. A Philistine element, for all the culture prevailing, was strong in Oxford, since any awakening of the University, as such, had hardly opened men's eyes to contemplate the realm of art as a whole. Praise is due to those who favoured this special enterprise. Some of these confessed with candour, later on, that though on the side of the angels, they had rushed in where angels would have feared to tread. For the very name of Shelley sounded strangely in Oxonian ears. Fitly enough, the men of the Cambridge Union were also leaders in a society known as the "Apostles" and their coming to Oxford was a wonderful proof of genuine missionary zeal. Their chosen delegates, starting out to vindicate a prophet in his own country, could be trusted to perform their task with zeal.

In debate, the name of Shelley was to be contrasted with that of Byron. The two poets were to be set up as rivals to one another. There might be nothing original or startling in this. In a sense, the two had run the race of life together : for a time they had been associated in friendship. In some circles, their names were mentioned with the same appreciation and pride. Byron represented Cambridge in a way which could not apply to Shelley, whose episodic career at Oxford had been most imperfectly understood. But it was still most perfectly remembered. Certain views, based on definite memories, were circulated now about the gentle poet of University College: how abstracted had been his airs, how ill-regulated his conduct in spite of his decorum. For Shelley had deliberately shut himself off from the gregarious life, as much indeed from the college gatherings which struck him as commonplace, as from the " turbulent animalisms " which filled him with disgust. What men around him did, his own lips described as insipid, uncongenial, even low: but he himself touched sublimity, and he hailed it for the sublimity which escaped into his poetry and was in truth " the soul of his soul." That all this should have been ignored, how natural! It was a poet's fate. And yet it is some consolation to know, in spite of apparent rejection, of actual contumely, that Oxford could claim some share in forming the self of Shelley, and that time's revenges have been sufficiently poetic in their justice to identify him with the spirit of the place.

This identification may even now be traced. The Cambridge missionaries were bent on introducing Oxford to her own poet: the man for whom obscurity, even infamy, was often thought to be the rightful portion. In this year, 1829, the ninth from his death—as it was the sixth from Byron's—opinion of Shelley's greatness, assurance of his immortality as poet, had hardly shaped itself in the outer world. Cambridge knew more, had even worked hard to bring him recognition. Oxford, which should have been his spiritual home, had only played an unenlightened part: but Shelley as poet undoubtedly lived on: and while there is life there is hope. Cambridge men, with righteous indignation backing their enthusiasm, had found a grievance which could be redressed, and they fulfilled their task in the most delightful fashion.

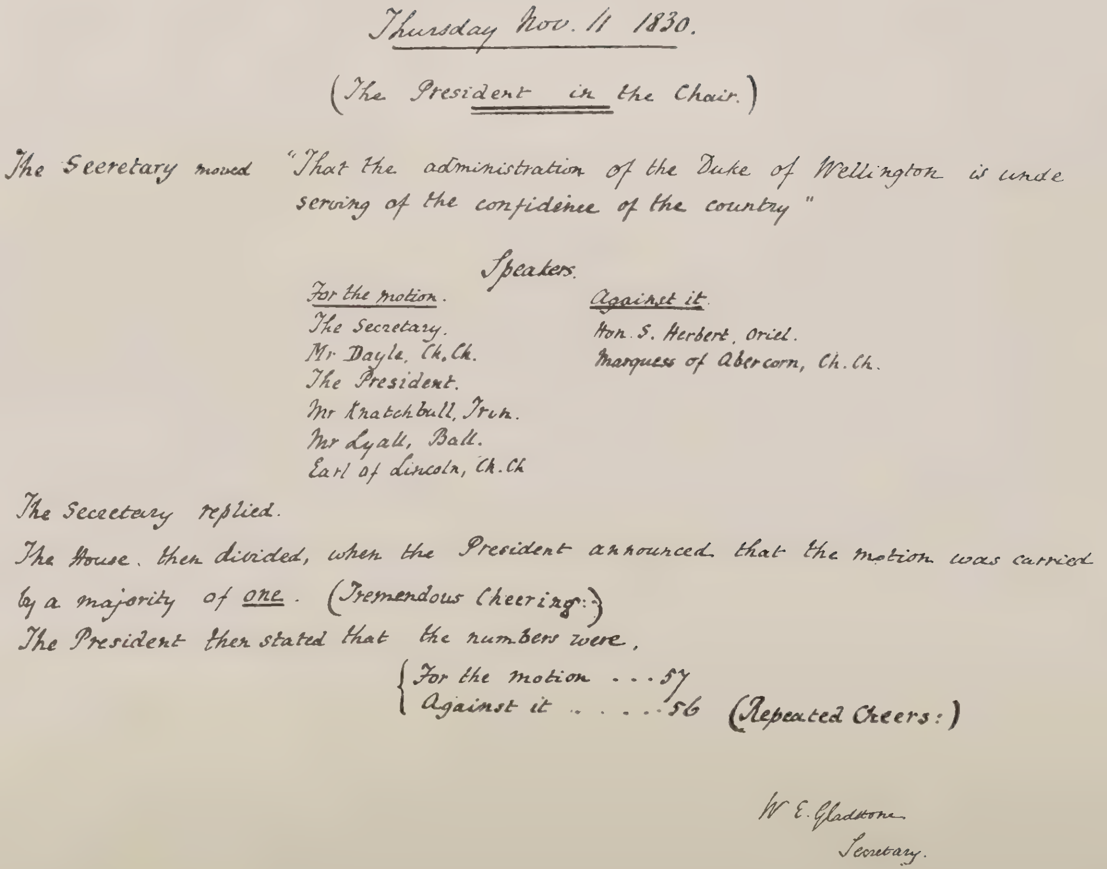
Homely enough are the descriptions which have come down to us of this pleasant meeting. It is possible to follow the journeying of the visitors from Cambridge to Oxford by the old " Pluck " coach across a country deep in snow, for winter of traditional type had come in with the close of November, and the debate was fixed for November 29th. The representatives of Cambridge were Arthur Henry Hallam, Thomas Sunderland, and Monckton Milnes. To the end of his life the last-named (Lord Houghton) felt uncertain whether he had or had not dissembled to Wordsworth, the venerable Master of Trinity, in asking leave of absence. At any rate he had been tempted to suppress Shelley's name as hardly mentionable to ears polite. He had been gated, too, and had only joined the others by an act of defiance: escaping without even a hat. Everything, in fact, was in keeping with a venturesome quest, but the three men had a dual object, delightful in its nature. They wanted to glorify Shelley and they wanted to see Oxford and its lions. Oxford in its turn put forth very special efforts to greet them. The coach was met by a band of Etonians, William Ewart Gladstone at their head. Their journey had been a dreary one, but their hosts soon refreshed them and they were ready to proceed. " The Union benches," said one who was present, " instead of being scantily dotted with indifferent occupants, swarmed and murmured like a hive of bees." The scene made a most favourable impression on the Cambridge men. They were ready and anxious to begin: and then, as Milnes said: " The contrast from our long, noisy, shuffling, scraping, talking, vulgar, ridiculous-looking kind of assembly, to a neat little square room, with 80 or 90 young gentlemen sprucely dressed, sitting on chairs or lounging about the fireplace, was enough to unnerve a more confident person than myself."

It fell to Francis Doyle—the Sir Francis Doyle who became Oxford's Professor of Poetry—to open the debate: the question being simply whether Shelley was superior as a poet to Byron, or Byron to Shelley. The *ipsissima verba* of the speakers are wholly lacking, but, from the beginning, it became clear that for or against Shelley no one in Oxford was ready to say much



W. E. GLADSTONE WELCOMING THE DEPUTATION FROM THE CAMBRIDGE UNION TO OXFORD, NOVEMBER 26, 1829.

From a contemporary Print republished by the "Graphic" in the "Gladstone Memorial Number," May, 1898.



Thursday Nov. 11 1830.

(The President in the Chair.)

The Secretary moved "That the administration of the Duke of Wellington is undeserving of the confidence of the country"

Speakers.

For the motion.	Against it.
The Secretary.	Hon. S. Herbert, Oriel.
Mr Doyle, Ch. Ch.	Marquess of Abercorn, Ch. Ch.
The President.	
Mr Knatchbull, Trin.	
Mr Lyall, Ball.	
Earl of Lincoln, Ch. Ch	

The Secretary replied.

The House then divided, when the President announced that the motion was carried by a majority of ONE. (Tremendous Cheering:)

The President then stated that the numbers were,

For the motion . . . 57
Against it . . . . . 56 (Repeated Cheers:)

W E. Gladstone
Secretary.

A PAGE FROM THE UNION DEBATES, 1830.

Copy of the Minutes written and signed by the Secretary, W. E. Gladstone.

that would have been worth recording. Even Manning, who spoke, apparently, from a brief which had been carefully prepared, brought out an argument strange in itself, and little calculated to influence or to impress. For he showed with an almost relentless candour that indifference towards Shelley's thought and work was prevalent even, perhaps indeed more especially, in Oxford, among reading men. Byron they knew. Byron they could appreciate. Manning's speech, following on the powerful appeals contributed by Sunderland, Hallam and Milnes, had no influence at all, though admiration could be expressed for it as a piece of clever special pleading. Strange to relate, the pose affected by Oxford in this matter was rather a subtle form of ignorance, based, in the main, on what feeling could be cherished in an intellectual man with a stubborn honesty as a defence against what was believed to be atheism. Herein, at this epoch, Oxford hardly dreamed in public debate of disputing the decisions of authority, for these had the force of an accepted revelation. But the Cambridge men, in speaking for Shelley, swept this defence away. It was a defence against an imaginary foe. The result was seen at once. The most blatant of the Oxford speakers (for one man had handled Shelley roughly) came over to the Cambridge side. Manning himself, years later, recollecting the occasion, simply declared that the debate had been a mistake, so ill-equipped were he and his friends to cope with the real Shelley: with all, indeed, that ethereal poetry implies. Gladstone, who took no part, eventually spoke lightly and humorously, too, of the effect of "the invasion of barbarians among civilized men." Or was it, he asked, "of civilized men among barbarians?" He spoke up for Manning's ability in defending a lost cause. But as a proof of ability only. The question at issue had to be decided on spiritual grounds. Such was the challenge. Manning took no spiritual line, though he endeavoured subsequently to throw a spiritual interpretation on what he had said. The truth was, that as soon as he was on his feet he repented his rashness in speaking at all. But he gave his opposers their due :

"We Oxford men were precise, orderly, and morbidly afraid of excess in word or manner. The Cambridge oratory came in like a flood into a mill-pond. Both Milnes and Hallam took us aback by the boldness and freedom of their manner. But I remember the effect of Sunderland's declamation to this day. It had never been seen or heard before among us. We cowered like birds and ran like sheep. . . . I acknowledge that we were utterly routed."

Manning realized, in fact, even whilst he was speaking, as he caught Herman Merivale's eye, that neither he nor any man in the room could be a match for the trio of antagonists. Here were specialists, who knew and could prove that the position of Shelley in the poetical firmament was that of a brilliant star : nor did any one of them need to belittle Byron. Neither Byron's power, still less his prevailing influence among the multitudes whom poetry touched at all, could be affected by appreciation of Shelley. Justice was done on both sides of the house to Byron's creativeness, skill, originality—all the qualities which belonged to his admitted greatness as a writer. But Shelley stood for something different, after all. And in the calendar of relative ascendancy Shelley has long since found the very place which these his early champions claimed for him. This brooding truth must have dawned prophetically on the debaters.

If Sunderland astonished, Hallam did more to persuade his hearers that the Shelley whom Oxford had persecuted must eventually come into his own. Hallam was the man who had helped to rescue *Adonais* from neglect, himself to become, through a great poet, a classic figure, an ensample, as long as the language shall last, of the beauty inherent in manly living and accomplishment. For speaking he had a gift, and it was a gift heightened by the cultivation of unusual powers since early boyhood. Metaphysical depths of thought and feeling had already been sounded by him, and for the poet of his choice, master of organ or trumpet or of the slenderest reed, who had passed through life in touch with divinity though others knew it not, he uttered with passion what passion steeped in knowledge could positively prove.

It was left to Milnes to bring the discussion to a close. This is the account of what followed, in the words of Sir Francis Doyle :

" Lord Houghton then stood up and showed consummate skill as an advocate. In order to prove Shelley's approximation out of his boyish atheism to the principles of Christian truth, he read, with great taste and feeling, that fine chorus from the 'Hellas,' one of Shelley's latest works, the chorus containing this stanza :

A power from the unknown God,
  A Promethean conqueror came,
Like a triumphant path, he trod
  The thorns of death and shame.

Anxious, however, perhaps over-anxious to tread the truth into the ignorant and unthinking multitude before him, he passed somewhat lightly over the fact that the chorus in question is a dramatic chorus and put by the poet into the mouths of captive Christian women. After him there was silence in the Union for several minutes, and then Mr. Manning of Balliol, perhaps at that time the leader of our debates, with great propriety rose. He felt that it would be a somewhat clownish and inhospitable proceeding if those bold guests went away unchallenged. He spoke well, exceedingly well, but the framework of his argument amounted to just this : 'Byron is a great poet, we have all of us read Byron ; but if Shelley had been a great poet, we should have read him also ; but we none of us have done so. Therefore Shelley is not a great poet—*à fortiori*, he is not so great a poet as Byron.'

In hanc sententiam, an immense majority at the Union went *pedibus:* the debate was over."

When put to the vote, the motion was carried in favour of Byron by a majority of 33 in a poll of 123. The ninety who thus voted against Shelley were following to a large extent the natural course of voting for what they thought they could best understand. In spite of the eloquence exhibited in favour of Shelley, which had really converted everybody, a vote for Byron was the most natural way of complimenting the visitors, since Byron was a Cambridge man ; and from this time forward it passed into a tradition at the Union that this kind of compliment should be paid. There is a further moral to be drawn. Rivalry between schools of poetry is of course the most fantastic thing in the world, and no vote of the kind can prove anything one way or the other. Such proceedings, however, may enlighten and convince and broaden the mind. To have held a debate at all on such a subject indicated a great advance for the society. But there was something more, of definite good, which sprang from the Shelley debate. It was talked about in Oxford for years : in fact it is talked of still. It helped to create an atmosphere for poetry. It extended the region of the debatable and sent men back to their rooms to reconsider a neglected poet, especially in relation to the whole wide question of repression in which the Union as a body was vitally concerned. For Oxford the debate on Shelley became historic. Though an abysmal ignorance had been revealed, and though it had been shown that appreciation of these high matters belonged but to the few, these few had signally triumphed. Cambridge had wrought a fine action, thoroughly well thought out, and it is not fanciful to date from this event the actual rehabilitation of Shelley's name and fame in Oxford. The Cambridge guests departed, delighted with their reception : the moral effects of their visit were to be carried forward for generations amongst grateful members of the Oxford Union.

CHAPTER III

ENTER A FUTURE CARDINAL—MANNING: A FUTURE PRIME MINISTER — GLADSTONE: WITH SIDELIGHTS ON THEIR FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES

THE three Wilberforces, Robert and Henry no less than the redoubtable Samuel, had all contributed much of value to the society still feeling its way towards general acceptance and approval. Now, the Wilberforce mantle was thrown over the shoulders of Manning, and so the Oriel tradition, for a time, was transferred to Balliol. Manning, rather older than the rest of the active group at the Union, possessed a measure of assurance, uncommon enough in itself and calculated to produce an effect whenever he was placed in competition with others. If, as has been said, the contest waged over Byron and Shelley was only, on the Oxford side, a hollow affair, Manning had at least stepped manfully into the breach and had made the best of a bad case; after which, for a time, he became vigorous enough in the prosecution of similar efforts. He liked the Union and its amenities. It had become "very respectable." There was occasional excitement, too. Party feeling often ran high. The interchange, over private business, of argument, chatter, or chaff, could be decidedly amusing. He decided to cultivate it. On one occasion he made a speech in favour of free trade in wool. An owner of broad acres and many flocks, Sir John Hanmer, *more suo*, had spoken. In his own words, this launched Henry Edward Manning "into a new life." The Union, he had begun to realize, was distinctly harmless and might prove positively useful. But soon it dawned on him that reading for the schools was more important. Some advantages, open to his rivals, fortune had given—only to take them away. Whilst he, too, had cherished a political ambition of the ordinary type, this could only be secured, as things were, by men amply equipped with money : fortune, in this sense, has always favoured those who are opulent as well as brave. This applied even to the man who has sometimes been represented as his rival, with the further implication that Manning's later attitude to the Union was prompted by jealousy of Gladstone. But the early familiarity of the two men in these days could rise, and probably did rise, to a real friendliness : the Anglican bond was a real one then : indifference and a final separation came later on. The demands on his time, the necessity for concentration, were sufficient reasons to induce Manning, after taking up debating with fervour for a little while, to let it go. But it is clear, to quote Mr. Purcell, that Manning's reputation at Oxford rested in the main " on his achievements as a ready and agreeable speaker at the Union."

Manning had, indeed, many admirers. In the light of later events, especially of one event which never happened, though gossip and prophecy often forestalled it, it is amusing to note how to some followers at the Union the future cardinal appeared like a pope. To one of them in particular, Stephen Denison of Christ Church, Manning seemed infallible, though the analogy is imperfect, for the question propounded had no relation either to faith or morals. But very naturally Denison, like a good many other people, was hazy about such a point as the barilla duty, on which the framers of a certain bill laid a very special stress, whilst critics worked themselves into a frenzy over it. What *was* the barilla duty ? Denison went to Manning, who had an explanation ready. In commerce, he explained, there were two methods of proceeding. " At one time you load your ship with a particular commodity such as tea, wine, or tobacco ; and in the language of trade we denominate this operation barilla." The inquirer went away deeply impressed. But within a week he discovered that Manning had completely misled him. He had learned that barilla really meant burnt seaweed, and . . . his trust in Manning waned. No special moral attaches to this story : the Manning of that day could see a joke as well as anybody. . . .

On the serious side, Manning's time at the Union (all too short, for he was elected to the presidency only to resign it) shows him not less eager than his fellows for the formation of opinion. He could never forget the value of this brief association with these forward-reaching spirits. He cherished memories of them all for a lifetime with inward gratitude. Many of them were men on whom the light of startling events (measuring by what was considered startling in the Victorian age) was to be thrown : for Oxford is inseparable from her movements, some of which have an evolutionary, all a reflexive effect. This consideration adds a certain lustre to the methods whereby the Union, like a minor university, had revived, in a newer, less restricted form, the disputations which formed so striking a part of the life of mediæval academies. Manning himself had certainly given to the Union as much as he had gained. His personality alone counted for a great deal. A figure spare, agile, tall ; his face a true index of the informing mind ; the eyes luminous ; the manner distinguished : he impressed all with whom he came in contact. His portrait, once seen, fixes itself in the recollection. There is power in these lineaments. There are resolution, sympathy, and grace. Such qualifications, revealing an absolute distinctiveness which affected his brilliant contemporaries, have a special interest when his own career is contrasted with the careers of Bishop Wilberforce and Mr. Gladstone. All three were allied in the Union under forms which admitted of some rivalry ; but at the same time they were associated by the aspiration common to all at a certain time of life. Later, as the result of making special terms with the age in which they lived, each one of them risked, no doubt, a posthumous impeachment. The path which leads to a biography is a rough one to tread. So it was with Manning in his career: but that career does not fall within our purview. What remains, however, of these days,—for "the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts,"—can be brought out in terms of refreshment and consolation. "We were much at one," the eminent prelate once said, "in our aspirations towards service to the commonwealth." He rejoiced, as he spoke these words, in the thought that he had numbered Wilberforce the eloquent, Sidney Herbert the noble, Elgin of the copious imagination, among his friends, for so he described them, rejoicing that these should have sustained the promises made at Oxford in contact with the realities of experience and action. The *laudator temporis acti* could have had no finer text to enlarge on.

The leadership of the Union now passed to Gladstone by common consent. Monckton Milnes, when writing about the Shelley debate, had used a phrase of quaint expressiveness when he said: "The man that *took* me most was the youngest Gladstone of Liverpool—I am sure, a very superior person." This was no gibe. It was a sincere compliment. Gladstone's superiority had a wonderful inclusiveness, and he possessed many personal qualities manifestly favouring an early advance into public life. Milnes even contrasted him with Gaskell, who seemed "unaffected, simple, good-natured even to boyishness." A gay sociableness, naturally, was prevalent where men of the calibre of the Earl of Lincoln (later Duke of Newcastle), Benjamin Harrison, Charles Marriott, George Rickards, Roundell Palmer forgathered from Christ Church, Oriel, or Trinity: and over all of them the "rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories" speedily cast his spell. One of his earliest speeches in the Union was in connexion with the rejection of a scurrilous newspaper known as *The Age*, as to which it is recorded: "Mr. Gladstone, after speaking at great length against the motion, voted for it." One of his last, as an active member, was to support the exclusion of a leading periodical on account of its Radicalism. A good deal of speculation has been indulged in as to the sincerity of the individual who, on the first of these occasions, so quickly changed his mind; and much ink has been expended on this fascinating topic, mostly as a tribute to statesmanship on its trial. But these episodes, taken together, seem to show a masterful mind, strenuous to assert some governing principle, and at this date the principle accepted was Toryism: the kind of Toryism which could yield to persuasiveness on matters of trivial concern, but on matters of importance (though some were governed by sheer prejudice) would sternly refuse to unbend.

Our "rising hope" received the compliment of election to the secretaryship of the Union on May 13, 1830. His name had been added to the committee in the previous term. He had exerted, from his first joining, a considerable influence. If he found it a school of prejudices, he did not change it into a school of wider political thought. For one thing, his own predilections were shown when, banishing others, he secured the admission of critical and theological journals, excellent in themselves but in spirit at least sectarian—a proof of the sincere interest in religious matters which grew to a lifelong devotion. It may be inferred from Gladstone's attitude to other things that warlike tendencies met with scant encouragement at his hands, and books, for instance, dealing with sea-power were the kind of books for which he thought the society could have no particular use. When it came to political questions it was soon seen that he had the root of such matters in him. No doubt he could have made much of other issues. But from the discussion of Shelley he had discreetly refrained. He would not rush in without knowledge: what he chose to touch he could generally illuminate. If comparisons were in the air, his talents, it might have been said, were akin to those of Arthur Hallam. From him could be expected the fervent appeal, the ready reference, the swift answer, " the rapt oration, flowing free."

Actually, Gladstone's first speech in debate, on February 11, 1830, dealt with a somewhat obscure question as to the conduct of Mr. Fox in dealing with treason and sedition. For one steeped in admiration for a certain cause and a certain hero, the next opportune moment came when, with Herbert in the chair, Vaughan of Balliol, supported by Gaskell, brought forward a motion in commendation of Canning. Gladstone idolized Canning. After Gaskell, an amendment was proposed by Moncrieff which brought Manning—for the last time—Doyle, and Gladstone to their feet. The amendment was ambiguous, but a division upon it might have prevented any complete or generous appraisal of Canning, and this would have pleased the Whigs. It was defeated, as was a second amendment moved by Harding of Oriel. And then the original motion : " That Mr. Canning's conduct as a Minister is deserving of the highest commendation," was carried by a large majority.

Not a few debates followed which proved the reactionary zeal of the society. It was actually unwilling to concede any representation in Parliament to Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham. In the same direction Gladstone went a good deal farther even than most of his friends, for he recorded his vote against the removal of Jewish disabilities. On June 17, 1830, he spoke against a motion that colleges, to be established in London, for the education of the higher middle classes would be beneficial to the whole community : and on this question, though the proposal was approved, opinion seems to have been almost equally divided. This debate ended the summer term of 1830 ; in October, and again in November, the administration of the Duke of Wellington was subjected to special scrutiny, Gladstone taking part with keen determination and effective scorn.

The first of these debates attacked the foreign policy for which the Duke was responsible, but the condemnation proposed was rejected on a poll of 72 by a majority of 24. Gladstone and the men who were with him, including the majority of the speakers, resolved, on hearing the resounding cheers which greeted the decision, to raise the question in another form, hoping that they might win the day.

There was definite political significance in the motion which provided instruction and entertainment for the evening of November 11, 1830. The issue ran: " That the administration of the Duke of Wellington is undeserving of the confidence of the country."

For many reasons the Ministry was not likely to survive. Confusion had long been rife in high places. The question of political consistency was constantly being raised against leading men, and everything had been further complicated by the attitude of the King towards Catholic Emancipation. Peel had recanted his former doctrines, had lost the Oxford seat on that account, had gained another in its place, and so set a thousand partisans on the differing sides at variance with another. Who could be called consistent now? For those who professed themselves true Tories there had been a great betrayal, a surrender to the Whigs: political excitement organized earthquakes and arranged tornadoes: even a duel had been fought to satisfy the pretensions of honour. As to consistency, Peel, in convincing terms, had pointed out the absurdity of requiring, politically, such a thing in a changing political world; but the same charge followed Gladstone to his grave and is capable, even now, of arousing interest, even a kind of fury, wherever his name is heard. When the Duke of Wellington had to be attacked, no doubt the new exponent of Toryism in Oxford was ready enough to put forward this particular accusation against those who fell short of his standard of statesmanlike firmness: but Gladstone's more practical work over this fresh motion had been to prepare the mind of the Union for it. He had, in fact, persuaded the committee to fertilize this ground by a rain of pamphlets. "The Country without a Government." "The Duke of Wellington and the Whigs." "Observations For and Against Lord Brougham." Such publications as these lay on the tables for all to study. In the actual debate, Gaskell, Lyall, and the Earl of Lincoln supported, whilst Sidney Herbert and the Marquess (later Duke) of Abercorn were in opposition to Gladstone. His supremacy in presenting a case now became apparent. He certainly turned many votes, as may be seen by comparing the figures of the previous debate with this one.

There were not a few who were beginning to look to Gladstone for elementary instruction, whilst some of the more advanced regarded him as a leader, confident that leadership in great affairs was as certain for him as that the sun would continue to rise and set. This conviction was often expressed in letters of the time. Even while he was speaking, men would actually cross from the Liberal to the Conservative side of the House. This second motion, dealing with the Duke of Wellington's conduct of affairs, clinched his influence, which was to rise yet higher when he dealt with matters of greater and wider import. The Reform Bills were not yet, but they were coming. He was going to stand up against them, to lead, in fact, a forlorn hope and to carry a great majority with him as far as the University was concerned. No great majority was to stand by him on the motion against the Duke. But he was to reverse the position nevertheless. The course of the debate and its general effect are shown most strikingly in the minutes which he himself, as secretary, recorded. Even these are distinctive, original. "The House then divided," it is written, "when the President announced that the motion was carried by a majority of one. (*Tremendous cheering.*) The President then stated that the numbers were: For the motion, 57. Against it, 56. (*Repeated cheers.*)" Some of these, no doubt, were counter-cheers. The secretary took upon himself to add something more.

This something more, which some officious individual took the trouble to erase, was recovered, many years after, as the result of photographing these minutes for reproduction. Gladstone had originally written, not merely the words as just stated, but—"*Tremendous cheering from the majority of one.*" The erasure could be justified in theory, though rather feebly carried out. It was not for the secretary to express his feelings in the minutes. But this particular secretary had his own views, and he took the opportunity of expressing his feelings soon after his election to the presidency, which followed his successful speech. He took the chair as President on November 18, 1830. It was from the chair on December 2 that he formally condemned the practice "which some honourable gentleman had adopted, of defacing the records of the society." He fixed the assembly with his eagle eye: and "all the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer."

Critical problems were opened up by Earl Grey's Ministry, which succeeded that of the Duke of Wellington. This involved the crucial business of parliamentary reform, disturbed all England for more than a generation, and brought the Union to the holding of a debate which extended over the three evenings of May 16, 17 and 19, 1831. This proved an actual turning-point in Gladstone's career. Lyall of Balliol was in the chair, and Knatchbull of Trinity moved: "That the present Ministry is incompetent to carry on the Government of the country." Palmer, Herbert, Tait, Elgin, Lincoln, Gaskell, all took part: and Robert Lowe also plunged quite unexpectedly into the fray. Lowe's contribution has survived through a racy description. "For a certain number of Thursdays," wrote Sir Francis Doyle, "I had watched, affectionately and respectfully, an old gentleman with snow-white hair. . . . Week after week I kept saying to myself, 'There is that dear old boy again. How nice of him to come and investigate for himself what we are worth!'" In the early part of this debate Earl Grey and his Ministers had been denounced as a vile crew of traitors. Doyle's account proceeds: "Up jumped my patriarch (it was the summer term, with the boat races in full force), and in a bold and vigorous tone of voice took the speaker thus to task: 'The honourable gentleman has called His Majesty's Ministers a crew. We accept the omen, a crew they are; and with Lord Grey for stroke, Lord Brougham for steerer, and the whole people of England halloing on the banks, I can tell the honourable gentleman that they are pretty sure of winning the race.'" Lowe was loudly applauded. The recorder sat dumbfounded, for at first he had thought that his respected Methuselah had gone mad. He was soon to become better acquainted with the "white-headed boy," the Bob Lowe who became Lord Sherbrooke, and to realize that an acquisition of importance was now within the society's reach. After Tait's speech the society adjourned, so that it was not until the second evening, after six others had risen, that Gladstone spoke; and here is his amendment:

> "That the Ministry has unwisely introduced, and most unscrupulously forwarded, a measure which threatens not only to change the form of our Government, but ultimately to break up the very foundations of social order, as well as materially to forward the views of those who are pursuing this project throughout the civilized world."

There is a reflection here of the Union's state of mind: more, of the country's. The society had met in unsuppressed excitement. The debate, as Doyle remarked, was the outgrowth of a genuine passion, and Gladstone expounded his views in such a way that everybody felt pride in his powers and fell into anticipatory raptures concerning the career that lay before him. On this field at least the budding politician had gained a highly prized success of personal acceptance and appreciation, one that was never forgotten, especially by his opponents.

In this connexion, it is interesting to recall the attack delivered by Benjamin Disraeli thirty-five years later, together with the Oxford recollections in which both he and his rival indulged. The matter before the House of Commons was the Reform Bill of 1866. "The other day," said Disraeli, "I was looking over the records of a celebrated assembly—I will not say as celebrated as the House of Commons, though unquestionably men as illustrious as any that ever figured in the House of Commons belonged to it—and the period was one similar to the present. The time was when the great Reform Bill was introduced in 1831. The country then was greatly agitated. Mr. Knatchbull moved, in Wyatt's Rooms—honourable members opposite will remember Wyatt's Rooms and the Oxford Union—a resolution declaring the Ministry's incompetence. It was supported—one remembers it almost with a sigh—by Mr. Sidney Herbert. . . ." Disraeli then read to the House the very amendment which had stood in the name of Mr. William Gladstone of Christ Church, and taunted him: deploring his inconsistency and ironically suggesting that he might accept it instead of the one, moved by a noble lord, which was under consideration.

Disraeli's great opponent made a reply which, in spirit and in phrasing, reached the heights of parliamentary eloquence. He reproached his powerful critic, with imitative irony, for raking up the past, a past which he had long and bitterly repented, wondering that the right honourable gentleman should not have resisted the temptation that offered itself to his appetite for effect. "As the right honourable gentleman has exhibited me, let me exhibit myself." So he spoke, continuing:

"What he has stated is true. I deeply regret it; but I was bred under the shadow of the great name of Canning; every influence connected with that name governed the politics of my childhood and my youth. With Canning I rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities, and in the character which he gave to our policy abroad; with Canning I rejoiced in the opening which he made towards the establishment of free commercial exchanges between great nations; with Canning, and under the shadow of that great name, and under the shadow of that yet more venerable name of Burke, I grant, my youthful mind and imagination were impressed with the same idle and futile fears which still bewilder and distract the mature mind of the right honourable gentleman. I had received that fear and alarm of the first Reform Bill in the days of my undergraduate career at Oxford which the right honourable gentleman now feels; and the only difference between us is this—I thank him for bringing it out—that, having those views, I moved the Oxford Union Debating Society to express them clearly, plainly, forcibly, in downright English, while the right honourable gentleman does not dare to tell the nation what it is that he really thinks, and is content to skulk under the shelter of the meaningless amendment moved by the noble lord. And now, sir, I quit the right honourable gentleman. I leave him to his reflections, and I envy him not one particle of the polemical advantage which he has gained by his discreet reference to the proceedings of the Oxford Union Society in the year of grace 1831."

To revert to that memorable year, 1831, in the light of the strictures just recorded. The intricacies of political life and work always have involved adaptation of points of view, and always will. Obedience to a jot will compel subservience to a tittle. Some people are temperamentally unable to look beyond their own noses. Others may acquire the myopic habit because it has become a fashion: or because, like other diseases, this one is infectious. Some minds, accepting a rule, make it their regimen for ever. The system which such an attitude implies will not last long where the clash of movements intervenes: but its entrenchments are strong. They are also venerable. Ecclesiastical prejudices, constitutional theories, were potent forces to the Gladstonian mind. But in the nature of things the young man could not be, at this time, anything more than an experimental politician. Nobody could have foreseen how he would develop, except that something notable must come of him. There is abundant evidence to this effect. Before he left Oxford the eyes of leading men were fixed on him because of his reputation in the Union. Charles Wordsworth, who lived to become Bishop of St. Andrews, declared that he must rise to the premiership. Wordsworth was not less certain of this than of his own existence. He believed, at the same time, that the Union would save the country; meaning that reform was the devil to be exorcised and that his hero would prove to be the saviour, building, as build he would, on the foundations already laid. In the debate which created such a sensation, Gladstone's portentous amendment, with all its terrors thick upon it, like lava from a volcano, was actually carried with the motion, 94 votes against 38 being registered : a majority in its favour of 56. Gladstone had won. All the participants had striven valiantly to do justice to the question at issue. Tait and Gaskell, like Lowe, had argued against this vote. Lyall had been heard. Lowe had intervened with effect. Elgin had spoken with flow of voice and ingenuity of reasoning. But it was Gladstone who had held all enthralled, not so much with his charm as with his power. As a direct consequence of this debate, he received through Lord Lincoln an offer of a seat in Parliament for a borough in the control of the Duke of Newcastle. For the rest, as Doyle the faithful recorder declares, the feeling was that an epoch in the lives of all present had occurred. Such was the impression created : such the enthusiasm evoked.

There was just one other subject of importance through which the earlier Gladstonian ethics were tested whilst he was busy here, and whereby his faculty for acute analysis was brought into play. This was a motion brought forward by Moncrieff on June 2, 1831, and it marks the close of Gladstone's career as a speaker at the Union, which always felt thenceforward how greatly his presence had strengthened it. Its theories had been upheld, its chances for the future enhanced, by the possession and co-operation of such a man. Moncrieff had proposed: "That the slaves in our West India colonies ought to be emancipated without delay, and that all due precaution should be taken which is consistent with that measure." Completer reforms in connexion with slavery were of course long overdue. The general sense of the society was appreciative of this fact. Challenges on the subject had frequently produced the sympathetic response and the fervent discourse. Nor could the tradition of the Wilberforces be ignored. Here Gladstone seized the opportunity of introducing a characteristic amendment recommending legislative enactments to be enforced, if necessary, under three specific proposals:

1. A better guarding of personal and civic rights.
2. Compulsory manumission.
3. Christian education: which would lead gradually to complete emancipation by following the earliest Christian procedure.

Such words as these were coloured by the sense of filial duty, involving compromise—for Sir John Gladstone was a slave-owner—but they were warmed by a true moral and religious prepossession. And this was recognized. Whenever Gladstone was speaking, he secured something beyond mere attention. When young Alston of Christ Church, son of a well-known Whig member of Parliament, had turned his vote over, he spoke on Gladstone's side in the reform debate, a signal proof of the peculiar strength which lay in persuading others. So it was when questions of humanitarian tendency were raised. His diction told. His name passed from lip to lip. The membership and the attendance at the debates increased threefold. He had proved the advantage of taking the Union seriously. He could deliver himself finely. Freely, too, for all his life he flowed exuberantly with words, figures, facts. He possessed a magnificent memory. Of the speech on the slavery amendment Lowe subsequently wrote: "As far as mere elocution went, Mr. Gladstone spoke as well as he does now (in 1876). He had taken just as much pains with the subject as he would have if he had been Secretary of State for the Colonies. He did not launch into commonplaces about the rights of man, but he proposed a well-considered and well-prepared scheme of gradual emancipation."

This thoroughness was emphasized by achievements in the schools. A double first-classman, where others attained equivalent distinction, too often by excessive straining: as Pusey and others lamented: Gladstone stood out, at the period under review, inexhaustible, *primus inter pares*. He was the embodiment of the Union spirit at its best. His prowess and his progress aroused the greatest curiosity. That he was destined "listening senates to command," nobody doubted, whenever his tall figure with black hair and flashing eyes emerged from the crowded benches, afire with zeal. He would develop, yes. But hopefulness, persistence, passion of youth were quite consistent with a disregard of some of the awakening ideas which stirred his opponents. These factors must not be ignored. There is no positive evidence that he got as far, for instance, in appreciating, as Tait did, the justice of the claim for Catholic Emancipation: though it may be assumed that free-trade principles had declared themselves as righteous to his mind at an early date. Whatever views he might actually express, he could only appear, at this stage, as an experimental politician, one who like many others closed many questions from loyalty to a class, whose prejudices were rooted in a party. He nevertheless preserved, or rather reserved, for the use which experience would exact, an open mind. The world was to see remarkable consequences from this reservation. Oxford was to take a special interest in its stormy developments.

Meanwhile, thirty-eight men had supported reform in this epoch-marking debate. In other ways, members of Liberal tinge had to fight their way inch by inch. During Elgin's presidency a vote in favour of freedom of the Press had been won. But, as a sidelight on another aspect of affairs, the appearance of such freedom in this form was resolutely checked. Gladstone was even among those who helped to secure, for more than a year, the rejection of such a publication as the *Westminster Review*, representing the opinions of the philosophical Radicals. Outside the society again, anti-reform was active enough. In the general election of 1831, when one of the members for Oxfordshire had resigned, Lord Norreys standing again, two or three hundred undergraduates had ridden out to meet that nobleman, bringing with them £800, a subscription from the colleges. Here was an indication of the University's mind. In the general agitation, town and gown had been fiercely involved. Free fights over the great question at issue were not infrequent. Meetings of the Union had to be abandoned owing to the riotous conditions prevailing. Right through the country excitement rose to the greatest heights and intimidation was the order of the day. When Palmer of Magdalen (a cousin of Roundell Palmer) moved that the whole of the Union funds then available should be subscribed to promote the return of anti-reform members to Parliament, the idea received some support. But the motion was defeated. To many, the prospects before the country seemed as disastrous as they did to Gladstone. Politically, it might be said, the Union had so far been inclined to preserve for a party what had been provided for the State. Socially, its theory of exclusiveness held good, and there was much to be said for it, especially in view of the fact that nothing of luxury and little enough comfort was provided: to anticipate Wordsworth, it could not be said of the society that " plain living and high thinking were no more." Intellectually, the standard maintained was a high one. And yet there was a certain amount of give and take. The result of this political, social, intellectual combination was that each element tempered the other and relativity and unity did their work for all.

In these days, then, eventful for all the organisms in a crowded country, it is clear that forward movements could hardly be suppressed, even in Oxford. Gladstone himself numbered among his friends a man of broadening views in Frederick Denison Maurice, who was associated with him at the Union and in a smaller society, the "W.E.G." The devotion indicated by these initials developed till it was merged among a larger populace in affectionate admiration for a "G.O.M." But Maurice's trend at Oxford was speculative, never political. Some infusion of the scholarly, even the poetic, could not be wanting from the atmosphere of a University which candour declared on the whole to be illiberal. Yet all the men within the Union, which was no mere echo of the greater institution, were feeling their way to a method. None felt irresponsible towards the future. In some eyes what the country needed was a renewal of stability; in the eyes of others, it needed reconstruction. At this stage it happened that, after a good many rebuffs of one kind and another, recognition of the claims of a minority proved the acceptance of a principle. The election of Massie of Wadham, a Liberal, as President, testified, at the close of the year 1831, to a spirit which augured well for the future. Wadham, as a college, was destined in many ways during successive generations to exercise a particular influence. And so the society expanded. In other directions, when the call to sympathy, for instance, came, and antagonisms were hushed by human suffering, the generosity of youth gave an answer as effective as it was direct, for, on a motion which was accepted without a dissentient, the sum of thirty pounds was sent to relieve misery in Ireland—all the money that the society possessed at the time. It is pleasant to pause on this note : to reflect that difficulties and distresses of the general lot were not lost sight of. From whatever point of view they are looked at, these men of the first decade emerge luminously out of the shadows. They represented Oxford thought—ascending, not descending—and so new vistas were opening out all round, Sentiment, linked with pride, rich as the secret spring of memory itself, is effectual to make men recognize that unity, a happy and desirable thing, is not to be encompassed without diversity. In their association, seeking truth, a Lowe and a Lincoln, an Elgin and a Tait, a Herbert and a Gladstone, foretold in their collective words and gestures their individual capacity for great affairs. And the word was passed round that here in the Oxford Union was something more than the cradle of culture : it would prove to be the nursery of political genius.

CHAPTER IV

"UNIOMACHIA." THE BATTLE OF THE "RAMBLERS"

HAPPY in its memories, the Union could now pursue the uneven tenor of its way. Expansion of any kind might still be jealously regarded in Oxford, quite apart from the trivialities of mere debate, which some temperaments naturally treated with complete contempt. But against this withering disaffection the influence of current affairs was real enough in a period of wild unrest, when, as Mozley of Oriel acutely observed, every man who wished really to know things "must rummage them out for himself." The academic body, then or since, could not reasonably be estimated at its own restricted valuation. Here caution is necessary, for it has been recently declared by historical pundits that the term "university" implies "no necessary connexion with learning"; that the word only means "the aggregate of persons associated by a common tie"; that we must refer to mediæval conceptions in order to understand it at all, and that if we forsake the idea of a limited body with very limited aims we shall be utterly out in our reckoning. Such narrowness seems somehow to nullify itself; to belong to the letter which killeth: whereas the spirit giveth life. "*Nihil humanum a me alienum puto*" passes easily from the poet's page into the heart, the imagination of youth. It is impossible to confine a world within a word. Oxford, as we look at the latest century of her growth, has been proud to become enlarged in many directions, even beyond her own great tradition of humaner letters: and the time must arrive when her mission, educationally speaking, will be seen to be universal.

But this is by the way. It is also on the way. It is a way looking backwards and forwards and all round, but not in a circle. To Thomas Mozley we owe some bright pictures of what the Union was in his time. From the very first, some aspects of a change to come over the world had been marked by attention given to the affairs of republican institutions and things of that kind. Before he gave up debating, Manning himself had shown an appreciation of this wider field. The Union took in many newspapers, even in the 'thirties. Some of these were American, notably the *Baltimore Democrat*, and this at a time when Cobbett's *Register* had to be fought for. It was proposed to lessen the costs incurred for certain items, and so discontinuance of one of the American papers was suggested. Manning opposed this.

"He deprecated any retrograde step in the progress of political knowledge and international sympathy. Did we know too much about the United States? Did we care too much for them? It was the order of Providence we should be as one. If we could not be under the same government, yet we had a common blood, common faith, common institutions. America was running a race with us in literature, in science, and in art, and if we ceased to learn from her what she could teach us, we might find ourselves one day much behindhand." Manning spoke for an hour, no restriction being imposed during private business, "bewitching" his hearers, so that they quite forgot the original proposal to save a few pounds, and "only felt themselves going along with Manning, whatever he might be driving at."

In other directions, too, through "private business," other members looked forth on the world with discriminating eyes. "In the year 1831 the whole fabric of English, and indeed of European, society was trembling to its foundations." So Mozley wrote. The words sound more like an echo than a knell. They prefigure for us the appalling sensations of recurrent experience. But historical parallels are for ever reasserting themselves, and, whenever danger threatens, the soldierly instincts of Englishmen are bound to be in it.

It was no mere sociableness that guided those who now proposed courtesies from the Union to officers in His Majesty's service: the gesture was one of instinctive patriotism as well. But it was not so easy to procure unanimity. The active majority, not by any means representing the society's full strength, put forth objections and created a lively scene when it was proposed, on November 24, 1831, "to consider officers of regiments, quartered in Oxford, honorary members of the society." Lyall of Balliol was President, and even his decision that the motion did not contravene the rules was greatly resented. The discussion became angry. Knatchbull stood for rigid adhesion to the principle that members of the University only could be admitted. He announced that he would press for the adjournment of the house, however often such a motion might have to be moved. The angry discussion was continued by Palmer, Massie, Oakes and others. It was a ding-dong fight. Motions for the adjournment were brought forward many times and as many times were lost until, at 12.30 on Friday morning, having defied all proscriptions as to time, the combatants called a truce, though their energies were by no means exhausted. Some time later a compromise was arrived at. In December the officers of the 91st Regiment received a welcome, and it seems clear that some of these gentlemen, friends of Eton members, had expressed an interest in the debates: similarly, in March, 1832, a specific invitation went forth to officers of the Coldstreams. So, as time went on, the Union contrived to exercise hospitality and to make the most, as a club, of its somewhat exiguous resources.

There now arose developments of another kind, affecting the vitality of the Union indeed, but also raising its latent powers of friction, rivalry, and collective acerbity in a high degree. Eton supremacy was temporarily on the wane. If any school took the lead, such advance was being made by Winchester. To this succession, between the spring of 1832 and the winter of 1833, Palmer, Cardwell, Ward and Wickens belonged. These, with a few others, ran the committees, which were strengthened by the Scottish cleverness and caution contributed by Tait. The idea of Wykehamist supremacy gave umbrage to Brancker and Massie from Wadham, to Lowe from University. The committees at this time, and for many generations after, were chosen by personal selection : as to membership of the society, black-balling was common, but at the same time capricious. If a man was well thought of by the ruling few he obtained a place on the committee. Once there, he generally had a right to office, with the further right of nominating his successor. With these intensive forces at work, a sort of oligarchy was often established, which, at intervals, brought considerable feeling into play, and the warfare between political parties became almost as animated as the strife at the hustings or jealousies in the House of Commons.

Thus began excursions and alarms, but there was no crisis among parties yet. With the exemplary achievements of a Manning or a Gladstone fresh in mind, the society was on its mettle, desiring to compel an acceptance from the University at large, without which it could not hope to thrive. Through Oakes and Reeves of Merton, through Barne of Exeter, some interest in other colleges than those hitherto dominant was shown. The society forgathered in peace for many a meeting in Wyatt's Rooms. On the whole, the arrangement worked very well, though the place was used as a public auction-room by day. The reading-rooms were in another place, a few doors away, with a small apartment at the head of the stair for the use of the committee. In the debates, changes continued to be rung on familiar subjects. The characters of historical protagonists were for a long while next in attraction to the political problems of the period, now freely debated. Politics were seldom discussed without being prolonged into a second or even a third evening. Some of the decisions reached are interesting enough to be recorded, for there is generally a motive, it may be of high aspiration, it may be of class selfishness, discernible. When, early in 1833, the hereditary aristocracy was attacked, the proposer stood alone against nearly a hundred voting. Within the same year it was declared by forty-seven men out of fifty-three that the prospects of Great Britain were anything but brilliant.

It should be remembered here that every motion brought forward was coloured to a certain extent by the religious proclivities of the time. Theology was debarred, as leading not to purposeless but to disruptive strife ; and yet it was generally assumed that England (by law), and of all great institutions within her pale the University of Oxford (by choice as well), could only be guided and maintained under the ægis of the Church of England, wherein Protestantism was a secure, unquestioned principle, extending through the establishment to the national secular life and so accepted even by its enemies. Obscuring of the line thus drawn came much later. From 1823 to 1833 the average Oxford man never dreamed but that he knew exactly how he stood, and this made it all the more natural to respond to preponderating opinion, which for a time took it for granted that " Yes " must be said to Protestantism and " No " to everything else. Toleration of another reading of history was almost unthought of. Latitudinarianism kept itself to itself.

There remained, in spite of this, an indefinable air of the ecclesiastical seminary in Oxford. Whilst the cut of the academic cloth, everywhere visible, was a reminder of days past, breezes of memory might sweep through the thinker as he traversed the circuitous ways which lay between the bridge of St. Mary Magdalen and the fairway of St. Giles. But there happened to be a practical side to all this philosophy of religious sympathy or religious antagonism. Our young men would have to live in the world for the most part. Was it a thing of no particular moment that positions of profit and emolument were attached to available openings? Adherence to the "Thirty-Nine Articles" might secure provision for life. But an intellectual adventurousness attended the opening of every question. Thoughts of what the churches of the country ought to be, now attracted those who were supposed to leave such questions alone. Thus, and in other indirect ways, means were found to overstep any inconvenient barrier: so that before long religious problems under the guise of ecclesiastical politics were treated as freely as other themes. "High Church" and "Low Church" ideas respectively governed the antagonisms of the Union itself. "Coming events cast their shadows before." Coming events included the Tractarian movement.

Meanwhile, national education in relation to the Church secured attention. Freedom in civil affairs for extruded communities like those of the Catholics was approached and sometimes encouraged. But tending to overwhelm every possible advance of this kind were prejudice, privilege, even some passion. By the statutes of the colleges every religious question would naturally be prejudged. The Union, as some of its members realized, stood out against prejudging. At the same time, one aspect of Protestant ascendancy seemed free from any solid objection: it was at any rate constitutional; if so, loyalty might well accept it till the constitution should be altered. In the Church itself, however, conscientious spirits saw a good deal that decency would change. Sinecures and pluralities were attacked in debate. This could hardly be done without introducing some working theory of a spiritual religion, and one thing led to another. If the neglect of cathedrals suggested one point, the suppression of monasteries raised a second: there might be something to be discovered by contrasting the past with the present.

Nevertheless, anything like toleration towards all forms of religion, so far from progressing, was retarded. If one fence was thrown down, another was strengthened in its place. Jews were still outside the pale ; Papists remained under suspicion. In the Union, the man who spoke up for too much freedom in such matters was liable to be thought a freak. " Uncompromising attachment to the monarchy and to Protestantism " was the keynote of every vote passed about Ireland. Emancipative efforts involved " deep discouragement to Protestantism." They had to be checked by indignant resolutions, through which the accompanying groans are almost audible still.

Nevertheless, waves of change were passing over Oxford. If some grave spirits saw what they most cherished in the image of boats being sucked into a whirlpool, the Union, with hope and confidence, was looking " down the long age of truth which ripens slow " (to quote in grateful anticipation her own most notable poet). So much for the graver spirits. Progress, so-called, at best or worst, is only achieved by imperceptible gradations. But everybody is not heavily weighted with fears at the outset of life. The lighter side has always to be considered in youthful societies. The Wykehamist coterie which succeeded the Etonian dynasty (as Edward Nicholson of Trinity grandiloquently called it) ruled long : when it was challenged, a crisis developed which might have led to the collapse of the society, but happily in the end the trouble was extinguished by laughter.

Discontent, for a time, was checking everything. The opponents of the Cardwell crowd, who ran the Union on forced conservative lines, had been quietly voted down by the successful efforts of Massie of Wadham and his friends. These had silently procured proxies, and the existing committee, taken by surprise, found themselves ousted. They took their revenge very promptly, forming a new association, which met in private rooms for debate, much after the fashion of the

Union. This meant that the Union itself could only carry on with difficulty, for the dissentients boasted some of the best men. The new society was known as "The Ramblers." Election in the Union of Massie as President, of Lowe as librarian, in the winter term of 1833 had been the actual occasion determining this schism, of which Palmer, Ward, Cardwell and Tait were the originators. These four men had reputation. What they set up found quick support, so that to the consternation of the society the rival meetings were thronged. The Union dwindled. Mockery of Massie's discomfiture went forth in Cowperian strain:

> I am monarch of all I survey,
>   My right there is none to dispute;
> From the ante-room up to the chair
>   There is none but the fowl and the brute.

The play on one name in the last line and the implication of the last word were obvious enough, at the expense of prominent members, and so a war of personalities developed into a war of wits.

The committee of the Union now decided to engage in the fight and proposed expulsion from the society of all who at the expiration of a week should be shown to be members of the "Ramblers." And now the fat was really in the fire. Accommodation in Wyatt's Rooms was limited, and the word went round that in order to discuss the motion for expulsion, which promised to arouse the keenest feeling and to bring up all the available forces of both sides, the "Star Chamber" (later the big assembly room of the Clarendon Hotel in Cornmarket Street) had been engaged. The issue was joined.

To expel the "Ramblers" seemed likely from the very beginning to prove no easy task. Their supporters had gathered in large numbers. They had come tactically prepared. As the President, Massie of Wadham, was proposing the motion, Lowe of University took the chair in his place. This was a signal for the opposition to declare itself. An uproar over the occupation of the chair by the librarian arose early in the proceedings, in the course of which Tait of Balliol distinguished himself by his excited refusal, as he brandished his battered trencher, to bow to the authority of the chair.

Massie's hope of carrying the meeting with him was really a forlorn one. Tait, no doubt with the assumed dignity of a future archbishop, urged that the blame for contention and confusion lay, not with those who were perfectly willing to join in the activities of both the societies, but with those of the Union who had in one way and another taken too much upon themselves. But Tait was out of order. The future Chancellor of the Exchequer, appreciative of fiscal power, met Tait's persistence by fining him one pound. The President called on Lowe.

When Lowe came to speak, his volubility was frequently interrupted by cries and even hisses. These ebullitions seemed to stimulate him. He was now the official spokesman. What! he exclaimed, and, still more petulantly, Why? Why had the "Ramblers" instituted this traitorous movement? He sketched the history of the schism, pouring scorn on every profession of friendliness and demanding the final exclusion of all the participants from the Union—a bold step in all the circumstances, for against him were most of the men who possessed the talents especially required by the representative society. Continuing, the great "Loweides" expressed his views with pain, with emotion, but more, with the strained intensity of an accuser, demanding from interested judges the extreme penalties of the law: nor could the mock-heroics of the hour diminish the seriousness of the conflict. The society had been for some time, indeed, in actual jeopardy. But, as the debate proceeded, some useful suggestions were made and rays of light penetrated the darkening scene.

Senior and Sinclair, in defending the seceders, now scored several points. Senior was especially effective. He rallied the official champions for their obliquity of vision, declaring that exclusion would be impossible. How could men be turned out, who were prepared to continue their own debates and attend the Union as well ? It must by this time have dawned on Massie, as he replied to this amidst frenzied interruptions, that the forces ranged against him in the thronged and noisy chamber were more formidable than he had bargained for. The storm rose. It was difficult to check it. The scene was compared by an observer to the pandemonium which unpopular proctors sometimes brought upon themselves in the Sheldonian. Massie now presented his case as an ultimatum. The " Ramblers," he declared, could disperse, or they would be expelled from the Union. The overtures they had chosen to submit were rejected with scorn and derision. All the place rang with cries and counter-cries, recriminations and retorts. Palmer's persuasive accents availed but little. Sinclair, showing the strength of his party with gentleness and tact, could effect no change. Mayow, counselling prudence, tried to stem the tide, but in vain. Massie, cheered on by the extremists, flung forth with defiance his final resolve. Then Marriott of Oriel intervened, pleading for peace.

Charles Marriott the Rugbeian was a man stamped with those excellences of character which beyond others would make an impression in Oxford, which has ever loved to influence the world but is partial to other-worldliness. His personality attracted all. He had quality, too, as a first-classman who but for poor health would have doubled that distinction. Before the end of 1833 he had achieved his fellowship at Oriel. He was the inveterate browser in libraries, thinking nothing common or mean : in the deeps of his heart a lover of the divine in man, of the infinite in nature—a gatherer of roses even from entanglements of thorn. He had followed knowledge along highways or by-ways with the same restless energy: if he was to gain a reputation for singularity, that was hardly visible yet. To him in affection, in reliance, as to the man of trusted character, all eyes now turned. "Stung to the soul, he rose above the rest . . . Of Oriel's sons the dearest and the best." And so he was listened to. *Omnia haec mihi curae sunt, amici.* He was heard, all accounts agree, with respectful silence.

Marriott's message was simple enough in all conscience. His advice tallied with Palmer's, but was more disinterested; with Mayow's, but it sounded more impressive. "Cease then the war, your dire division, cease. And join the league of amity and peace." This counsel of Marriott's, which the writers of "Uniomachia" reported with the rest of the proceedings in three languages—Greek, Latin, English—a production of quaint wit and well-regulated art, had to bide some little while before it could expect to meet with general acceptance. The storm did not immediately subside. When actually taken, the vote astonished many. Though some of their leaders, Cardwell amongst these, had kept silence, the insurgent body had very skilfully presented their case, and they really held the Union in their hands. Massie had made his final effort with assured demeanour: had read his motion with majestic emphasis—"great Agamemnon" some called him—expecting a triumph. What met him were the figures of defeat. The "Ramblers" had scored a large majority. Had the result been different, any victory for officialism would have been a barren one. Brancker, the secretary, recorded the fact, no doubt, with feelings of discomfiture: but this did not prevent his careful entry to the effect that the announcement of the result was received "with tremendous cheering." The jubilation over the figures, 107 to 63, by which justification of the "Ramblers" was established, spread far beyond the Union through the streets of Oxford. The rivals in the fray gradually dispersed. It was necessary to refresh the inner man. The succulent oyster, the fragrant draught, dissipated shadows of the night in the traditional manner: if the episodes of the evening were fought all over again, no doubt a good deal of the bitterness vanished in smoke.

The efforts of poets have already been alluded to. The ultimate honours of peace belonged in fact, as usual, to the ameliorating pen. Friendships had been threatened. No doubt the humour of the whole situation appealed to many, the mollifying influences had worked something, and a definite break-up of both societies had been averted. But some ill-feeling remained. At this time it occurred to Thomas Jackson, in later life a London rector and a prebendary of St. Paul's, to throw oil on the troubled waters, to perpetrate, in classic phrase, "a college joke to cure the dumps." He happened to be engaged on a portentous classical task. He was correcting a new edition of Clarke's Homer for the University Press, and he thought, to quote his own words, "that some amusement, and perhaps some restoration to good-humour, might be elicited by a short macaronic poem, imitating the sounding march of the Iliad and barbarous latinity of the old translators and scholiasts."

The proposed poem resulted in a genial conspiracy between Mr. Jackson and one of the men who had taken part in the debate. This was Sinclair of St. Mary Hall, "Skimmerian Sinclair" as he was called. He had sided with the "new association," but his views were of a moderating kind; he might be credited with more than the average experience, and, as his striking portrait in the debating-hall tends to prove, was an exceptional man in bearing and physique. He entered into the fun of the thing with great spirit: notes were compared and the collaboration went forward. Historically, there can be no question that here, in the happily-named "Uniomachia," we have a recital adequate in its verisimilitude to facts then fresh in memory: linguistically—whether in the irresponsible mockery of a sacred tongue we are confronted with —

Ηὗτε τομκάττων κλαγγὴ περὶ γαρρετα σούνδει

or with its parallel line in the Latin —

Sicut cattorum clangor circum attica sonat:

for so the poem begins—well, linguistically, the affair may be said to succeed because of its sheer ingenuity and audacity. A little of it goes a long way. But—" there's the comment ! " The story itself is a straightforward one. It is conveyed by a series of mental pictures, and the pictures are crowded with detail. For the weaker vessel, an adequate English version is included " after the manner of the late ingenious Mr. Alexander Pope," beginning : —

As, when some antiquated virgin's hand
With baleful broom hath chased her feline band
Around the topmost garrets of the house
Each caterwauling Tom consoles his spouse ;
No less a clamour in thy room, O Star !
To Ramblers pale portended woes and war.

From this point justice is done to each figure, as each is introduced. The composure of a Cardwell is as plain as the impetuosity of a Massie. There is room to descant on the political prejudices of a Ward, on the implied distinctions, even, between gods and men. (The gods sat in committee.) How the Union authorities met their match, how indignation rose amidst the clamours of debate, all is recounted, and much more, to the dramatic conclusion of the affair : but the conclusion is not the end, for to secure a new beginning, not an end, was the object of the production. This was attained, for the poem, fortified by a commentary, came to be circulated far and wide ; and it made everybody laugh.

Within a few days of publication, " Uniomachia " had to be reprinted. A second edition was called for. The joke had caught on : it had even enlisted the sympathetic interest of

UNIOMACHIA

CANINO-ANGLICO-GRÆCE ET LATINE.

AD CODICUM FIDEM ACCURATISSIME RECENSUIT; ANNOTATIONIBUS HEAVYSTERNII ORNAVIT; ET SUAS INSUPER NOTULAS ADJECIT,

HABBAKUKIUS DUNDERHEADIUS,

COLL. LUG. BAT. OLIM SOC. ETC. ETC.

EDITIO TERTIA;

Auctior et emendatior: et Slawkenbergii animadversionibus, nunc primum in lucem prolatis, illustrata.

OXON.—M DCCC XXX III.

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO HABBAKUKIUS DUNDERHEADIUS,

Sometime Fellow, etc., of the renowned University of Leyden.

REVERED SIR,

The inestimable Homeric Fragment, which your singular patience of research hath given to the world, will hand down your name sacred and immortal to posterity.

The sagacity of your Annotations, appendent to this divine relic, hath left no room to the learned but for admiration. To the unlearned perchance my feeble translation may afford a dim glimpse of its beauties.

However infelicitous, O thrice sapient Sir! my effort to render adequately into the English tongue so precious a morsel, I am consoled by the hope of stimulating others to so worthy a toil, and by beholding the unheard-of success of the original, in the appearance of a third edition.

Suffer me, illustrious Sir, to subscribe myself, with all fitting veneration,

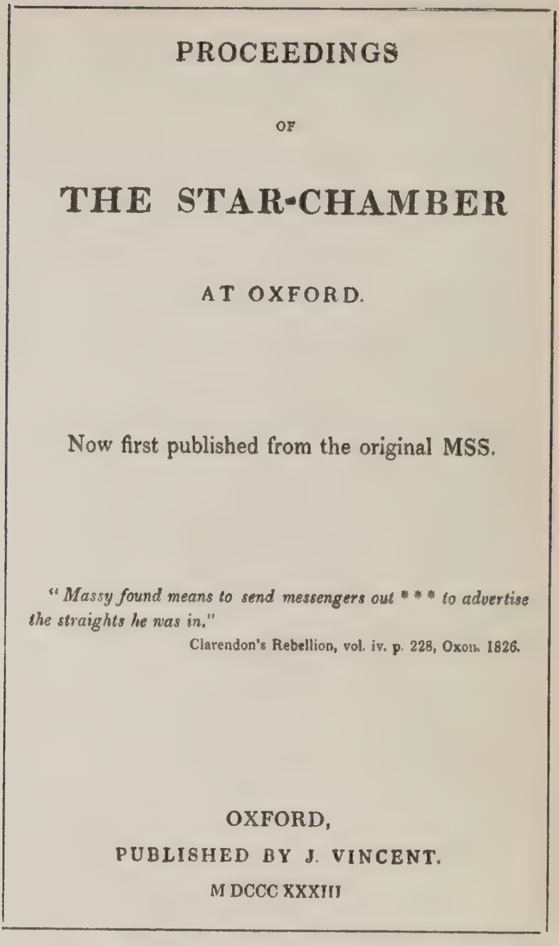
Your devoted Worshipper,

JEDEDIAH PUZZLEPATE.

one of the greatest authorities in the University, the learned lexicographer, Dr. Scott. "He condescended to write the 'Slawkenberg' addenda, remarkable for the brilliant ingenuity with which he makes it appear that much of the poem is good classical Greek." With this reinforcement, the merry game went on, and the pamphlet, in its third edition, of which two instructive pages appear herewith, created the idea that a battle in the Union could still conduce to gaiety in life. Nor was this all. Another bard elected to describe the engagement after the manner of Sir Walter Scott. The opening lines of his effusion are as follow:

PROCEEDINGS OF THE STAR-CHAMBER

The Ramblers have leaguered the Union powers,
There is weeping and wail in the Massieites' bowers:
Wail that good speeches no more are made,
That a spell on Cardwell's lips is laid,
That Sinclair, and Palmer, and Ward no more
Delight the house as they did of yore;
And the Chief of the Union means at the Star
To wage with Ramblers a wordy war.
You may change the course of the mountain burn
Ere Massie relent from his purpose stern,
And Eldon will turn a Radical
Ere Massie his troops from the field recall;
And Cambridge will yield to a Beverly
Ere Massie, or Lowe, or Brancker fly,
For expelled the Ramblers are doomed to be
As Parnell was from the Ministry.
Ours be the task to hymn the fray,
Who won and who lost on that battle day.
The hosts are met in the Star's proud hall,
And a gas-light flings its gleam o'er all,
Which shows both lines in their fair array,
Gown'd and capp'd, like the Golgotha;
On the right were Palmer and Sinclair seen,
And Mayow and Cardwell with Ward between.



PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE STAR-CHAMBER

AT OXFORD.

Now first published from the original MSS.

*“ Massy found means to send messengers out * * * to advertise the straights he was in.”*
Clarendon's Rebellion, vol. iv. p. 228, Oxon. 1826.

OXFORD,
PUBLISHED BY J. VINCENT.
M DCCC XXXIII

The bard dealt with Lowe and Senior in this fashion :—

[Up] spoke the bold librarian,
The foremost he of Massie's clan,
While through the Ramblers murmurs ran,
  “Our star is waxing dim.”
But vain the fears of Massie's foes,
And false the hopes of Massie's rows,
Lo ! Senior rises to oppose,
  And chaunt no funeral hymn.

With papery weapons in his hand,
All undismayed he takes his stand,
While Ramblers anxious cry,
" On, Senior, on! the field is ours;
Exert your periodic powers,
This night we live or die!"

The companion-picture in "Uniomachia" lays stress on other aspects of the struggle, and so the two versions are worthy of study together. The Alexandrine strain, i.e. the imitation of Pope, gives this impression of the scene just after Palmer had changed his disdain into reluctant concession in consequence of Mayow's prompting: —

The gen'rous hero ceased—with thund'ring sound
Tait shook his tassell'd cap and sprang to ground,
(The tassell'd cap by Juggins' hands was made
Or some keen brother of the London trade,
Unconscious of the stern decrees of fate,
What ruthless thumps the batter'd trencher wait,)
Dire was the clang, and dreadful from afar
Of Tait indignant, rushing to the war,
In vain the chair's dread mandate interfer'd,
Nor chair, nor fine, the angry warrior feared.
A forfeit pound th' unequal contest ends,
Loud rose the clamour of condoling friends.

This excellent fooling softened the tempers of both parties to what had threatened to develop into an enduring quarrel. Even so, it has to be confessed that a modified rancour prevailed to a certain extent for some time longer. The seceders returned to the Union, but did not re-enter the field of debate as long as their critics remained in office. However, the humours of the printed page are extant still. The battle has come down to us like the echo of a glorious day. The "Uniomachian" stanzas are packed with allusions which explain themselves, and they are to be read nearly a century afterwards with sympathetic and amused regard for all the participators, several of whom were to fill the most exalted offices in the State, and to fill them with great honour. But the allusiveness of the rhymes, which in the literary sense nobody will scrutinize too seriously, is rendered far more interesting and intriguing by the notes. These notes range over a great variety of subjects. They are inspired by such authorities as Heavysternius, Dunderheadius—and even by Slawkenbergius himself, behind whom lurks a famous Master of Balliol. Each frantic Greek or Latin pun is subjected to the examination of distorted scholiastic zeal: the refuges of the disputed text, the alternative reading, are frequently employed: indignation breaks out against each "*ineptam et stultissimam interpretationem!*" Nor are the asides and conclusions of the higher criticism altogether wanting, as when occasion is seized for a caustic deliverance: "*de iis qui officio quasi agglutinati adhaerent*": with the sinister addition—"*quod in publicis Angliae Ministris non sine admiratione observamus.*" But all the persiflage was not mockery. All the compliments were not left-handed. The whole thing brims over with good will.

The "Uniomachia" itself survived its own generation and was rescued from oblivion forty years later, when the chief participants were able to meet, some of them to shake hands even over changes which had brought opponents into political unity: for Lowe and Cardwell occupied places in the same Cabinet. As for the Union during the next few years, from 1834 to 1837, the succession was well maintained: Lowe, Marriott, Sinclair; Ward, Cardwell, Brancker—all occupied the presidential chair. The old preferences for discussion of an historical nature were reinforced by themes which were tinged by educational and literary enthusiasm: the movements of the time were taken seriously. It was not enough to advance from the condemnation of Cromwell to the rehabilitation of George the Fourth. The curiosities and the felicities of the Victorian age were dawning on the world.

CHAPTER V

FABER AND "IDEAL" WARD: THE TREVOR-LOWE ROW: MOWBRAY, STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, JOHN RUSKIN AND OTHERS AS "INCARNATIONS OF THE UNION"

A SERIOUSNESS not too formidable, combined with an absurdity not too irrational, had set the Union fairly on its course: a whimsical course, as one of its most eminent members has declared it to be. This dual character, indeed, persisted. It became constitutional. The whole "Rambler" business embodied a tradition. Before its echoes had died away, the most prominent combatants were active in public life, which mirrored, again, similar episodes and tendencies in a different setting. Here in Oxford it was realized that feuds need not be extreme, and in after years many looked back upon half-remembered incidents with pride. Stress may be laid on the pact that had been entered into. The parties had made a lively peace, and this had been ratified by a banquet at the "Star Inn," with Browne, a friend and admirer of Ward's, to say grace and secure a blessing for the scene.

Ward's name—W. G. Ward of Balliol—went forth for years as "the incarnation of the Union." His personality provokes a contrast with that of Charles Marriott of Oriel. Ward had some characteristics of other-worldliness, too; though, when proceedings were at their briskest, he had been described as "chief of the Tories"—a politician at least by assumption. But he had aims, as well as qualities, high in their nature. His important presence, his unwieldy figure, made him prominent. His mobile features were clear-cut, open-natured. In speech he carried his frankness, in manners his unconventionality, to a fault. His academic record was brilliant but a trifle wayward, and he had achieved it on his way, of course, to a fellowship, but not to a fellowship at All Souls, since he had chanced to shock the warden by the cut of his clothes and the shape of his boots; and when he appeared for a *viva* in the schools he had chosen to turn the business into ridicule whilst yet impressing the examiners, especially Dr. Jenkyns, with his brilliancy. This "large, moon-faced man," as Arthur Stanley described him, lounged through Oxford easily, musically, by no means ungracefully, an inveterate browser among books. In matters literary and religious his name has been handed down to later generations as the apostle of an ideal. From the time of relative strife at the Union into the time of positive calm, Ward survived with vivid interest intact. A leader in 1833, his name recurs several years later with Brancker's, official in the society's councils. Ward made an admirable president, and was elected twice.

Thus did one generation melt into another, making any decade a unified whole and still reaching out beyond. The men, consequently, of 1837, like Cornish and Stanley, contemporaries in every sense of Ward's, passed a jointly attractive influence into the 'forties and even into a later time They loved to associate themselves with a period almost historic because of strong individualities, powerful enough to impress the life of the day far beyond Oxford itself. Even so did the "Rambler" debate echo down the years. The irony of the split had left some jests behind it, too. "What," asked some critics, "could have been expected of a Club of which the president was 'Lie-all' and the secretary 'All-lies'?" For Lyall and Allies had been leaders of that old sedition. If, however, toll should be taken of their followers and friends, the type, collectively, could not be despised. Newman of Oriel, later the famous Cardinal, was among them.

By that one name a world of controversy is suggested. But Newman was not alone. Capes, Tickell, Faber, all were tinctured with predilections strange—as yet—to the normal Oxford view; and these were destined to sway and stir the religious University for generations—no small intellectual achievement in itself.

In other respects, men like Wickens, Richards, Barne, Cornish, all represented a general enlightenment, the very object for which both the Union and the other association had been striving. Cornish, changing his name to Mowbray, lived to accumulate political experiences for seventy years: but, at this time of the 'thirties, he was especially interested in the renewed vitality of the Union, no longer a threatened body. He and his friends watched and helped an absorption which identified them with a long period of Oxford life, much more than a mere academic generation, or even two. Some of the active characters in 1833 were still busy at the Union in 1838, whilst men who were their colleagues maintained their assiduity till 1844 or longer. But many of these looked backwards, too. To Browne, for instance, sharing the experiences of Ward, it occurred to wonder why the efforts of the dissidents had caused so much trouble? For he knew them as pursuing a homely course, quite compatible with the Union's interests. Roundell Palmer, again, the later Selborne, conceived that the schism being closed—and he persuaded himself that he had been indifferent in the whole affair—the "Rambler" interests might be consolidated in another guise.

Attention may here be called to the somewhat curious fact that within the Union of every period, practical interest in literary affairs has often been surprisingly wanting. This is strange in Oxford, where the *cacoëthes scribendi* is not to be escaped. Palmer and his friends of "Rambler" sympathies, however, blew a "Rambler" counterblast. The group started a magazine which saw some four to six numbers.

The periodical appeared under the editorship of Wall, a chancellor's prizeman, subsequently a fellow of Balliol. To this, with intellectual fervour, Wickens, Sinclair, Palmer, Giles (of Corpus) were the chief contributors. Last, but not least of these, was Faber. Faber of Balliol was actually secretary of the Union in the same year (1834) as Cornish of Christ Church, and the fact is of some importance in the amalgamation of these remoter memories.

Faber is worthy of special regard. He was Roundell Palmer's special companion and friend. " A man of genius, though not of that type in which strength predominates." Faber, assuredly, making allowance for Palmer's use of a term sometimes too generously used, comes into view as poet, if only because writing of the superlative hymn would in time justify the claim ; whilst Palmer never lost throughout his great legal career that peculiar sense, that emotional sentiment, which hymnody inspires. Faber's character was none the worse, not was it the feebler, for being complex. It was a saying of his, long before psychology came into fashion, that " a man has many biographies, moving in parallel lines." The idea might afford a text that would touch the careers of his colleagues and friends, overshadowed so often by the charge of inconsistency. The alternative Faber overflowed with spirits, his speeches brimmed with paradoxes : as for his messages, some of them are enshrined in lovable phrases of the English tongue. These have not wholly perished, and memories of the man himself are in the Oxford Union still, for he helped on the transition from storm-time to peace-time : one who occupied the secretarial seat pacifically, as a poet should, though he omitted to present his minutes in poetic form.

So, by this very transition, the " Ramblers " had left a legacy to the re-united society : and somewhat oddly the perpetuation of martial ardour was still intertwined with the name of Robert Lowe. The martial element, in fact, despite changes, had by no means suffered eclipse because a peace had been arranged. The paradox must have appealed to Faber. Even to the milder Marriott, who had groaned audibly when his friends fell out, there could have been no wish to make the Union entirely bloodless. Things will go wrong occasionally in any body of men: the Union had to expand: men differ enormously in temperament: but, as has been noticed, Oxford generations are far more a merging than they are a passing away—they exemplify very strongly the truth of Lord Acton's fine dictum: that "History is all one." Mowbray, too (under which name he shall go henceforward), recalling the keen following of debate by men of the calibre of Faber the actual poet, of Mellish the future judge, rejoiced also in the vivid strife of personalities. "A great school for the combative element," such to him was the prevailing idea for the Union. Like Jowett or Lake of Balliol, or else personally amongst Oxford friends of one generation or another, he would recall—as to the present writer in his pleasant garden at Warenne's Wood—the violence of these very storms, going back to the time of Lowe, and enjoy them again in the recounting.

Then, others were concerned. Benjamin Jowett, whose name will ever be one to conjure with, has fixed the date of his first connexion with Lowe as coinciding with the day in November, 1835, when he himself was elected (the greatest joy of his life) to a Balliol scholarship. He was hurried off to the Union immediately after the announcement of his own success. "We were promised," he writes, "a great passage of arms between two heroes of debate, a gentleman-commoner of Magdalen Hall, named Trevor, and Robert Lowe. . . . The Union had been in existence about ten years. During that ten years it had, much more than later, the character of a real House of Commons. . . . Those were the days of a political world before the flood, which has now passed out of remembrance. Never has there been so strong a party feeling as was manifested in England between the years 1829 and 1834. . . . Trevor was supposed, in some way or other, to have compromised the dignity of the Union by his communications with an American bishop, which he had contrived to get posted on the notice-boards of the colleges. This impertinence Bob Lowe, as we used familiarly to call him, undertook to chastise. There was also an old score which he had to settle, for his opponent had, a year or two before, accused Lowe's friend and schoolfellow, Cardwell, of fabricating the accounts of the Union, a charge which with difficulty he was induced to retract."

Here the parable is taken up by Lake, later Dean of Durham. "When the Union was at its best," he has written, with an eye on this history, "it was most quarrelsome. Some of us who had been pupils of Ward or Tait early learned that a good speech on a personal matter was something not to be despised. I heard the last speech, and a very characteristic one, which Lowe delivered at the Union. This was at the end of the 'Trevor row,' and it may be worth while describing it shortly. As the row began before I came into residence, I did not witness it myself, but the liveliest possible description was sent to me every week at Rugby by (Arthur) Stanley, who, though I do not think he ever spoke at the Union, took an intense interest in everything like a row. It was begun by a curious attack made by Trevor, a rather old, practised, and fluent speaker, upon the treasurer and some other member of the committee, against whom he was supposed to have some grudge, for having—what I believe he called—'forged and fabricated' the accounts. This must have run off into an attack on the committee, or it is hard to see how it can have run into six or seven weeks of vehement discussion.

"In the end Trevor tried, I believe, to explain the phrase away, and in the last meeting made a general apology which was warmly applauded by Charles Marriott of Oriel, who acted as a sort of peacemaker, and described Trevor's apology as 'noble.' This, however, was too much for his opponents and elicited one or two very sharp retorts, that of Tait, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who was then as always unable to suppress an occasional outburst, being long remembered. It was very much in these words :—' I too, Mr. Chairman, as an old and attached member of the Union, join my friend in congratulating the meeting—not indeed for anything "noble" in the speech of the honourable member, but at the close of the most disgraceful scenes I ever witnessed.' This, delivered with true Taitian vehemence, gave rise to a scene little less animated than one between the archbishop and a well-known bishop in the House of Lords more than forty years afterwards. The 'Trevor row' came to an end in June, 1835, and I only witnessed an after-skirmish between himself and Lowe in October, in which Lowe, who had often threatened to resign, certainly was worsted, Trevor reminding him with great effect how he had :

> Oft fitted the halter, oft traversed the cart,
> And oft bid Good-bye, but seemed loth to depart.

I never saw Trevor again till the days of the York convocation—Trevor became an honorary canon of York—when the old Union spirit was revived by some vigorous conflicts between some of the old Unionists and the then Archbishop Thomson, in which I don't think we got the worst of it !"

If this was Lowe's swan-song at the Union, he had left behind him the feeling that he could at any rate hold his own in a political fight : as for Trevor, the accounts of the Union were in perfect order, and, though he kept the society busy in discussing them for weeks, the vindication of the committee which had been responsible for them was final and complete. But the dispute kept tribulation alive : Jowett declared that the interchanges of compliments between Lowe and Trevor were like pistol-shots ; and the atmosphere fairly seethed with excitement, according to Stanley. It was all in the tradition, all in the fitness of things.

Lowe himself looked back on his days at the Union with a mild bewilderment. The great occasion on which he had fined Tait came under his own eyes for review: he had gone through an appeal and the house had found in his favour. On the whole, he thought he had been right, but did not pretend to have been impartial. Neither had Trevor been impartial. Sir John Mowbray thought his temperament not to be commended. In fact, when Trevor came under discussion, sixty years later, he did not mince words about him. But it is clear that Trevor apologized, lamely, perhaps, for he averred that he had only imputed fraud in a " mercanteel " sense. (Such, perhaps, was the approved pronunciation of the word in those days.) But William George Ward was the man who took the Trevor affair most deeply to heart. He was utterly obsessed by all this business. The wrongs of the committee, in being attacked, were a nightmare to him. He even dreamed that he was back at Winchester, construing some Latin thus :—*Bona* (a constitutional woman) *prognata* (sprung) *parentibus* (of parents) *bonis* (who likewise supported the committee). " For," added Sir John Mowbray, " Ward always called the supporters of the committee 'the constitutional party.' " He had great ideas for the Union, had Ward. He was keen, said Sir John, " in the highest sense." He regarded the spirit which animated Trevor, a man who had come up to Magdalen at the age of twenty-five after a business training in the old East India House, as abhorrent to an assembly of gentlemen. Ward, therefore, as a remedy for this, proposed in all seriousness that discussions on private business should be abandoned. He thought, no doubt, that committees should be trusted; that they should manage things as he would have managed them, with complete disinterestedness. There was probably no member of the whole society who took the same view. When his motion was rejected, Ward nearly fainted.

Very different was the attitude towards scenes of all sorts affected by Arthur Stanley. His matchless accounts, written later in life, of disputes and dissensions in the Eastern Church, were the outcome of his wonderful sense of the dramatic ; he lived always at highest pressure when he could watch humanity at variance. He, of all men, knew the unity which lay at the root of everything that really mattered. His, furthermore, was to be a life-work directed to the attainment of that very unity. But he was individual. He had his own outlook. When the question arose of opening the Union rooms on Sunday, a matter which engendered much dissension, Stanley was in favour of closing them. He had not, perhaps, regarded this matter wholly on its merits.

When in doubt, an Oxford man visits Cambridge. Stanley did this. He mingled at Downing with some of the leading men, including Whewell, a great figure, and here he heard something in favour of the common-sense view that Sunday should be regarded as a normal day, that freedom for a man's club was, after all, a fairly reasonable thing. At Oxford, however, those who wanted the Sunday use of the rooms included the more turbulent set. They used not arguments only. If argument went against them they resorted to a smashing measure. Of course this estranged even liberal opinion. When Capes (a Union president) suffered in his rooms at Christ Church, and when Faber (a Union secretary) was injured and nearly killed by a glass bottle hurled through a window, Stanley recorded the facts with a certain gusto : but he voted for law and order all the same. The devotees of strict Sunday observance, then consonant with law and custom throughout the country, were identified now with the more intellectual part of the society. So, being thus wounded in the house of its friends by missiles flung outside, the cause of Sunday liberation forfeited its claim to support and remained for a long time a bone of contention at Oxford.

There were other causes of agitation during a period when debates tended to languish, as they did between 1838 and 1840. Lake deplored this tendency. It could be explained. He had friends and colleagues within the Union such as Hessey of St. John's and Highton of Queen's, later known as headmasters respectively of Merchant Taylors' and Cheltenham, whilst other successions to the chair included Buckley of Brasenose and Rawlinson of Trinity, each of whom achieved eminence as professors. Perhaps these names, with the suggestion of what each stood for, are sufficient indication of a period in which the scholastic type of reasoner became more prominent. Yet it was soon discovered that to keep in constant touch with politics, a veritable channel to activity in life, would prove, for men of parts, all-important. Politics at Oxford, as will be seen later, were to increase in influence on the academic side. But even when excitement waned, there were still men of accomplishment continually arising, to freshen the atmosphere with their differing methods and temperaments and points of view. To this period belonged Stafford Northcote, a famous Chancellor of the Exchequer ; and Frederic Robertson of Brasenose, the man whose dialectical skill and poise of intellect were to draw a multitude of hearts throughout the country into recognition of what one man can do for his fellows by simple influence of the human voice, with soul and character resolutely called in aid for the common service. The title " Robertson of Brighton " testifies to a career which was unique : one to be held in due honour by all who care to look a little way into the past. Men who glance at the roll of those who have held office in the Union will pause when they read Robertson's name. He served as treasurer in the year 1839.

If Lake spoke a trifle despondently about these times, he cheered up when he reflected on the continued liveliness of private business. A widely circulated newspaper, socially and politically important, dealt with many matters very truculently and so shared with *John Bull* the attentions, hostile very often, of many members. Other periodicals came in for special scrutiny. William Cobbett's famous *Register* was regarded, on the whole, with consideration and respect, as though the man himself might on some grounds deserve encouragement. He belonged to the challenging order of scribes. Such spirits as his own were congenial to the liberalizing section of Oxford's youth. He could command the startling phrase; he, the uneducated, make the educated man sit up. Had he not once reflected, riding out from Oxford "at peep of day," that what he himself had written in a moderate space of time "would produce more effect and do more good in the world than all that had for a hundred years been written by all the members of the University"? This was a comprehensible sort of challenge: the author of "Rural Rides" might be considered and answered. When it came to a rag like *Bell's Life*, the Union divided sharply into those who would uphold a "moral" standard and those who would not. The debaters waxed furious over this. Lake was President "about the noisiest time." The house rocked with diverse emotions: choice extracts from the pink or purple page aroused moralists to argument and something more: for the reasoning of those who promulgated the doubtful or supported the disreputable was childish in the extreme, and as such had to be duly castigated. When the imperfect patience of talk had done its work, it was once more the windows of Christ Church which suffered, for Christ Church seems to have been the natural home of the rather impenitent blood. But, as Lake added, rage and anger were nothing more than high spirits after all: he himself reckoned the liveliest and pleasantest scenes of Oxford life as belonging to the Union. The debates and the occasional fights over private business were hot enough though never really ill-tempered. No better preparation for public speaking could be found than in the readiness, coolness and courage which they called forth. "We shall never be afraid of a mob," after a night like this, "we used often to say, after some very fiery fight over *Bell's Life in London*."

Meanwhile, about this time, Lake with Benjamin Brodie and other friends had formed a little society known as the "Decade," composed of a few select spirits, and in this Stanley, Matthew Arnold, Clough and Goulburn took a prominent part all through these years and on until 1844. This did not affect the prosperity of the Union as the "Ramblers" had threatened to do; but it adds point to the overlapping of men, methods and interests characteristic of Oxford to this day. The common ground was always that passionate need of expression which needs an outlet, and these societies, varying in procedure, with lesser formalities than those of the Union, were found decidedly useful. But the Union, just because of these formalities and just because of its potential largeness, had a place all its own. Men often found that to enter into its discussions opened up an entirely new field of thought and action. It became a definite ambition in Oxford to excel at the Union. Some men tried and failed. Others fought difficulties down and succeeded.

Mozley of Oriel, in the first years of the society, anxious in this way to show what he could do, had raised the vexed question of the seizure of the Danish Fleet, a topic still fresh in the minds of men. As soon as he rose, all his carefully prepared oration vanished from his mind; he collapsed and had to be gently led out of the room. He never tried speaking in the Union again. But his patient observation kept the attempts of others on record. Of Thomas Hobhouse, who had come up to Balliol from Charterhouse, he told the following story. Capital punishment for murder was being discussed. Rumour said that unwisely he had overprimed himself for speaking, and his manner was nervous . . . perhaps a little

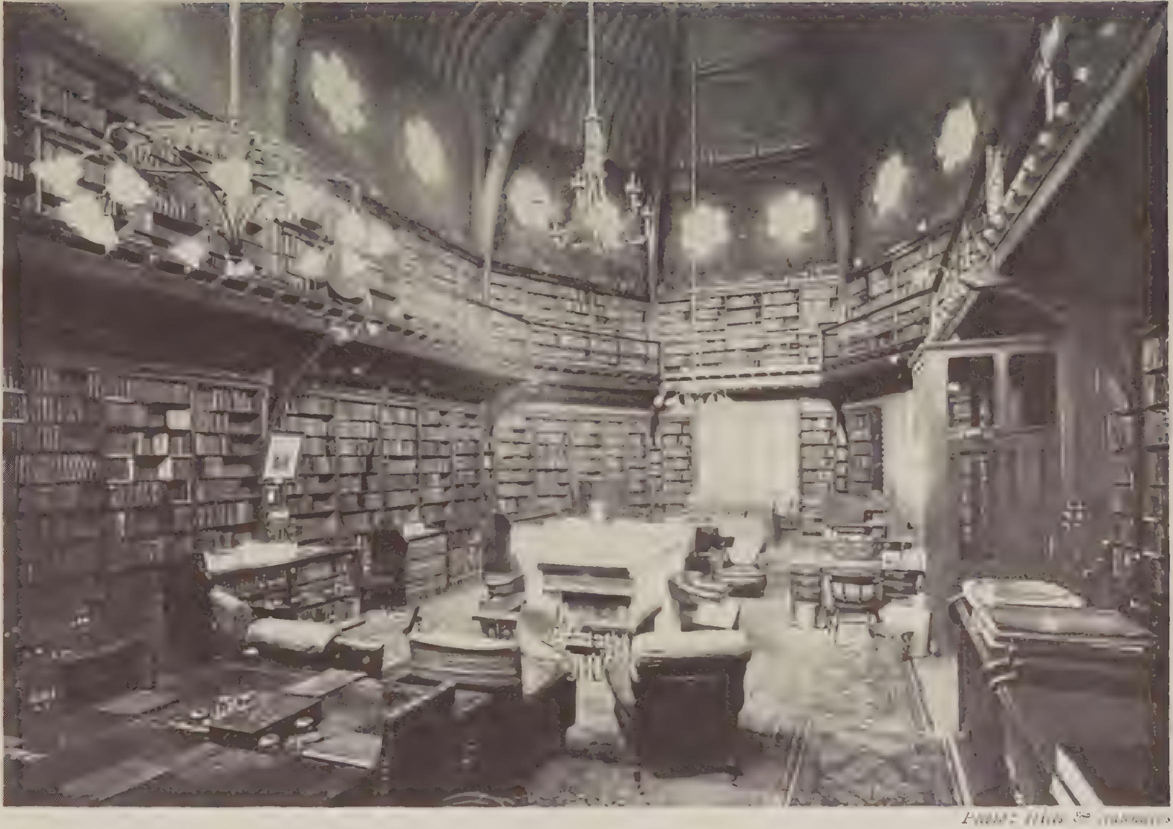


Photo: Hills & Saunders

THE LIBRARY : ORIGINALLY (1857) THE DEBATING HALL.

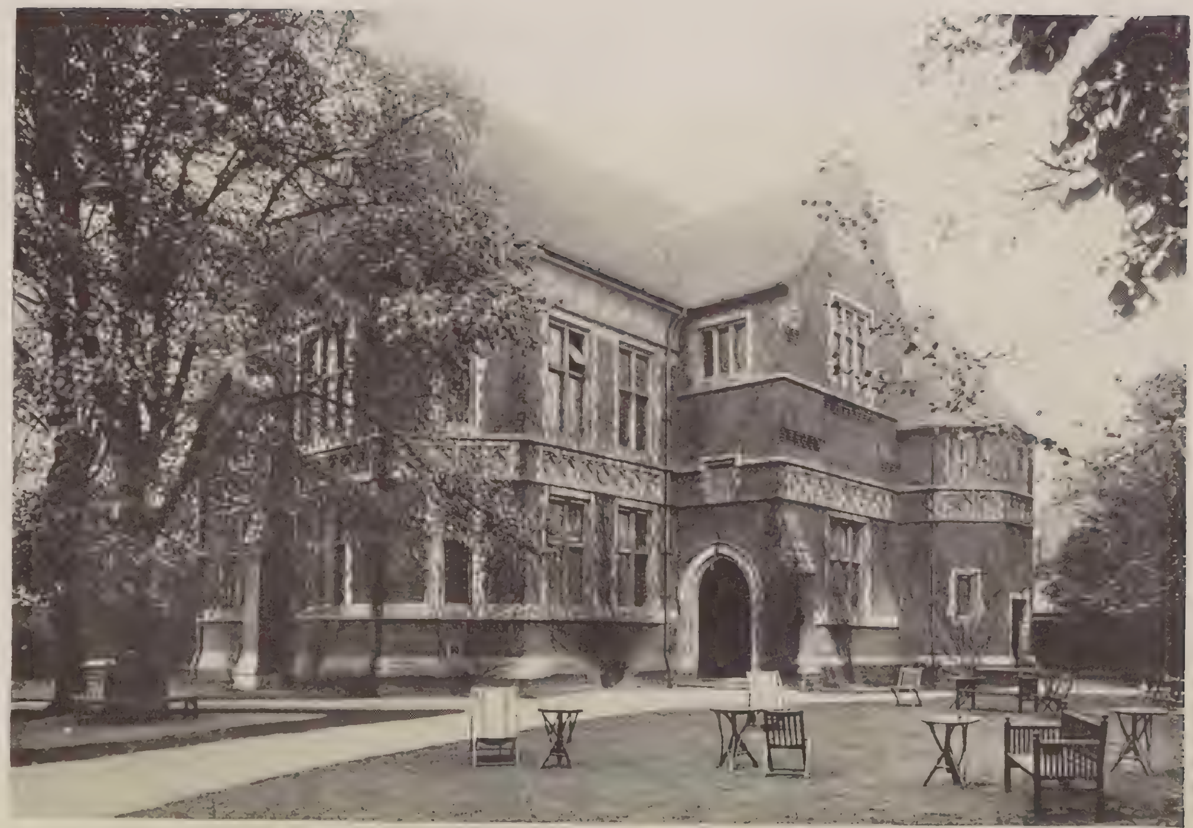


Photo: Hills & Saunders.

THE UNION DEBATING HALL, 1878.

confused. If, he said, people chose to divide land and build houses, to make goods and coin money, then we had to see that they did not encroach too much on common right. But your life? The danger was, not lest you should guard it too much, but lest you should not guard it enough. The most precious of possessions had to be protected by the greatest penalties. But he would go to the oldest of all law books, the foundation of all jurisprudence. There was a good deal in that book which was limited to place, time or circumstance, but there was no place, time or circumstance to limit the character of murder, or the justice of the penalty. The ancient and eternal law of the Bible in the case of murder had been expressly delivered to save mankind. He had taken care to write it. Nothing could be more express, and it took no lawyer to explain it: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by him shall man's blood be shed." (Laughter.) The roar stirred Hobhouse to greater earnestness. The Bible laughed at by gentlemen, and in Oxford! A cry: *"Well, but the text?"* "Call it a text if you like. It is a binding law, binding on all the world." Hobhouse took his paper. He read it again with emphasis on every word: "Whoso, sheddeth, man's, blood, by him, shall, man's, blood, be, shed." A friend snatched the paper and pointed out the mistake. "You all knew what I meant!" exclaimed the troubled orator. *"Then why didn't you say it?"* (More laughter. More derision.) Hobhouse recovered himself. "What signifies the mistake of a word?" Answer: *"But it does signify who is to kill us all!"* Hobhouse held his own, resumed his argument and finished his speech. The tradition held in the Union It was a practice-ground, on which a man could make mistakes and be all the better for it. And in these years Hobhouse had many a successor, for men would gradually gain confidence in speaking: not infrequently, as can be seen by reading between the lines, by taking up some forlorn hope and making out a case, even against odds, against reason itself.

In the main, sincerity and the desire to improve in speaking characterized most of the debates. Even in a small company much can be learned. Men of conviction, yet of conviction open to reason, took up subjects which needed careful study beforehand. There arose a most instructive and curious custom of bringing forward weighty amendments, little historical essays in themselves. It is quite remarkable how the problems of the Stuart age and dynasty survived. Once, in response to the suggestion that "Cromwell was greater than any crowned monarch that has ever sat on the throne of England," Rawlinson of Trinity moved and carried this overwhelming amendment :—" That Oliver Cromwell was the greatest rascal that ever sat on the English throne." The prevalent opinion on this immortal subject is further indicated by the following, moved in a similar debate :—" That we consider the difference between an hereditary monarchy and a self-raised usurper to be such as to preclude us from venturing to institute any comparison between them ; but that in fact we see nothing either in the domestic or in the foreign policy of Cromwell that can either justify us in admiring the period of his protectorate, or in looking upon it as otherwise than most disgraceful to our character as a nation." This too was carried, by a majority of eight out of nearly sixty votes. At this time an attendance of some sixty to eighty men was to be counted on for most meetings, and the questions propounded showed an appreciation of many a complicated issue. Cromwell was always an infallible draw : sometimes his character was put against Napoleon's. The talents of the latter were generally admitted and admired; his character was continually censured. Cromwell was generally denied even a talent. The execution of King Charles was frequently denounced. . . . Hereditary aristocracy was declared one of the most precious features of the constitution and the country. . . . The principles of the French Revolution were condemned. . . .

It may be said, in fact, that up to this time liberal readings of history had not begun to penetrate the Union: though this does not mean that these readings were left without exponents. Anyone, however, who took up the liberal side, whether merely for exercise, or as the result of conviction, knew that he must be defeated. When Ireland was considered, opportunities were given for declarations of faith in Queen and Protestantism as a political standard, defection from which was deemed equivalent to disloyalty and a desire to ruin the constitution. Though military service was seldom considered, the patriotic note was struck when the Government was called upon to realize its duty to the Navy. Northcote spoke in this debate, which resulted in a declaration, carried without a division, that the Ministry's neglect of the first line of defence reflected indelible disgrace upon it.

The range widened. Imperial interests were further considered when Radicalism in Canada, which had raised its horrid head more wickedly by an adoption of the principle of Home Rule, was unreservedly condemned. Lake, whose activity at the Union lasted till the end of the year 1840, left it on record that politics were not in a turbulent condition during this time, adding that in the Union and out of it "such Liberalism as Oxford possessed was very moderate, though the mere fact of being a Liberal had a very suspicious appearance." He squeaked into a fellowship at Balliol almost by a fluke. For the idea that two such Liberals as himself and Stanley were likely to stand created horror: so Stanley "thought it safer to apply to University, which elected him." Politics apart, Lake could report progress at the Union in respect of literature. Sober motions concerning poetry were occasionally moved. Novels might not be admitted to the library: but a guarded approval was once or twice, after discussion, accorded to such fiction as might deserve the epithet "good." The drama, even, was sometimes approached, and in this connexion Lake, as President in the last term of 1838, experienced a delight which can be recorded in his own words. "We were electrified one evening by a singularly brilliant speech, more full of poetry than rhetoric, from a member quite unknown to us. This was Mr. Ruskin of Christ Church: and I was so impressed by it that I at once asked him to join the committee in the following term." The motion before the house was the following: "That theatrical representations are on the whole highly beneficial to a nation." Ruskin spoke once again, this time on poetry's true object, as being more realized by modern than by ancient writers. So did John Ruskin characteristically show his hand, and his influence was to touch the Union more definitely yet. It meant a great deal to such a society that genius "rare, eccentric, darkling," to use Emerson's phrase, had not passed it by: and the sequel to this pleasing appearance of the ingenious gentleman-commoner from Christ Church will duly disclose itself when the phenomenon of Pre-Raphaelitism flashes on Oxford and on the society which is to share in the honours of its rising.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE 'FORTIES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: A TIME OF GRADUAL GROWTH FOR THE UNION

CHARLOTTE STREET, in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, London, is an obscure thoroughfare leading to nowhere in particular, the home of a stifled population. Its obscurity is redeemed by the church of St. John the Evangelist, which occupies a commanding site within it. Here is a memorial to Paul Parnell, once a Fellow of the College of St. John the Baptist in Oxford. The collocation of names and facts is suggestive. Parnell's record, in a double sense, was "writ in water." A man of the highest abilities, of moral worth, noble spirits, exceptional gifts—the testimony is Dean Burgon's—he secured at Oxford as much notoriety as fame. Dying on his way to Western Australia, where an official post had been secured for him, he was "buried in the great deep," as this memorial window duly records. But he left some bright memories behind him, especially in the Oxford Union. That society always exhibited, as a matter of principle, appreciation of the highest scholastic success; and Parnell had carried all before him in the schools. But he was also made for the joys and perils of publicity, and all believed that his natural strength of mind would lead him upwards. In self-assurance, too, he most conspicuously shone: a valuable asset when any invidious task had to be tackled. Parnell declared that the affairs of the Union had been grossly mismanaged. He arraigned a clique. With eloquence and determination he drove his accusations home. Considering the fact that the leading members were strongly entrenched, such a man must have been at a great disadvantage, for all his exceptional cleverness and power. Here rose little St. John's against mighty Christ Church: a new spectacle for Oxford and rather a strange one. Parnell ventured forth like David attacking Goliath. He had something in a sling. There the parallel ends. That something recoiled.

As treasurer in the year 1842, Parnell was not the solitary representative of his college to attain office in the Union, for Bellamy, also of St. John's, held the librarianship. There is interest, even now, in the juxtaposition of these two names. For "the one was taken, and the other left." James Bellamy settled down in due course to college routine, pursuing it, on the lines of least resistance, for more than seventy years, as an observer once wrote: "A picture and a proverb rolled into one," Of what proverb was the writer thinking? "*J'y suis, j'y reste*"? The disparity here is passing strange. But why express a wholly unavailing regret? *Dis aliter visum.* Philosophers, however, like Mansel and Burgon, both keen on Oxford, declared their emotion unreservedly, not as sentimentalists, but as scholars and thinkers. To all this (in respect of Parnell) most naturally-felt distress there was still a lighter and even a brighter side. Recklessness and a certain impetuosity—given a righteous cause—a man like Parnell, using, could take the consequences. It was all in the way of youth. But this truculence had odd results Within the Union it affected members of Parnell's own college: outside it affected himself. For it was he too who led a great demonstration, at the Encænia of 1843, against a detested proctor. That was a most riotous scene. The authorities, outraged, sent Parnell down for five years. "Disastrous!" was the comment of Burgon. "A result deplored by the whole University!" Parnell had deserved his fellowship, nevertheless: and the revenge taken by authority was perhaps excessive.

Into the administrative quarrel at the Union there is little need to enter now. It was generally a good thing when such questions were sifted: the society had still to find its feet in a business sense, for there was always a tendency to haphazard management. Apart from that, the Union was constantly in danger through the pretensions of one set of men or another. The "house" had a reputation for arrogance. Many, as yet, had no conception of what the Union might stand for—mutual expansion of intellectual freedom throughout the University as a whole—cordial co-operation of differing minds searching for truth—equality and union, through diversity, of college with college—indeed, as has been said before, the filling of a gap. Parnell had certainly made things hum. His action had been high-spirited. But one result of the feud, which now arose between Christ Church and St. John's, was that the power of blackballing on the part of the larger college was increasingly used. All testimonies agree on this point. Perhaps the most interesting and individually the most characteristic note is struck in a memorandum written by the Rev. H. Hayman, D.D., once a Fellow of St. John's and headmaster of Rugby. "My admission to the Union," he says, "was long delayed by the following singular circumstances. I was a scholar of my college, matriculated in 1841, and in the course of 1842 was proposed, seconded, and rejected. A series of attacks had been made by Paul Parnell of my college against the secretary of the Union, Blackett of Christ Church. A master of sarcasm and chaff, Parnell may have overstepped the line of parliamentary language. At any rate, Christ Church took up the matter warmly. As a result I became, although hardly known for good or ill outside my own college, the skittle, as it were, of the contending factions. Christ Church had three or four members to our one. The 'house' was large and central for the Union. St. John's was small and remote. As one blackball in four excluded, their members were easily able to swamp any force we could bring. I myself tried my fate three times, and was as often blackballed. In the end, Parnell incurred rustication and the Union knew him no more. Later, asperity cooled down. Others came into office, but not until 1844 did I try my fate again. In that term I made my maiden speech on a motion brought forward in private business."

Often in the official records occurs the entry—"As there was sufficient private business to occupy the evening, no debate was held." These were the nights on which personal acerbities and rivalries sometimes got the upper hand: but all the same it was in debate on serious subjects that men like Parnell excelled. "He would have been a tower of strength to the Conservative cause," said Burgon. So does Parnell pass out of sight. But Conservatism during this time was expressed in many ways. A grave morality appears in the quiet correctitude of the motions proposed and passed. The social condition of the masses caused some qualms. Could education remedy this? Not unless official religion could be quite sure of controlling any reform. Such was the usual answer. From this it was only a step, when past and present were compared (with a sigh for "the good old times"), to an amendment thus homiletically worded:—"That indiscriminately to decry the times in which we live, upon comparison of them with any period in past history, is a dangerous and mistaken practice; but that it is our duty, while we acknowledge our own defects, to endeavour to amend them by imitation of the wisdom of our fathers." Such was the improving proposition carried on February 23, 1843.

"The questions we raised in private business," says Dr. Hayman, now looking back with satisfaction on difficulties at last overcome, "were curiously illustrative of the temper of the Oxford youth of the time. The *Times* newspaper was held guilty of tergiversation on some question of current politics—had actually published articles on both sides in dealing with the same proposed measure. The motion was therefore brought forward: 'That *The Times* be excluded from the Reading Room.' So seriously in earnest were the moralists, in their censure of that literary perfidy! It happened that the chair that evening was occupied by Plumptre of University, a bachelor and a double-first, who declaimed 'in good set terms' against the offending journal, denouncing it as 'a political Ishmael, with its hand against every man, and he, for one, should be glad to see every man's hand against *it*.' Thus Plumptre threw all the weight of official position, and of his high and recent distinction, in favour of the motion.

"The next speaker talked a mixture of twaddle and blunder. The house gave him some rope, to show his quality. Then he was summarily 'scraped down.' The process then was—does it still prevail, or have manners mended?—to rasp the soles of your boots slowly along the floor—actual stamping, I suppose, was un-parliamentary—and thus to bring home to a bore the fact that 'he wasn't wanted.' I think I rose somewhat late in the debate, compared the motion to the Self-Denying Ordinance in the Long Parliament, cautioned the house against 'cutting off its nose to spite its face':—inquired, if it began at the *Times*, where it meant to stop?—pointed out that the contemplated rigour, if consistently carried out, would leave the reading-room table pure, no doubt, but rather bare. The *Morning Herald*, which perhaps ranked next to the *Times*, was then popularly known as 'Grandmama,' at any rate among us youthful readers. 'Considerations of youth and sex,' I continued, 'might perhaps spare the *Morning Herald*, but' . . . the notion of being 'left alone with Grandmama' was effective in hitting the humour of the house, and we carried it against the Chair, I think rather hollow.

"Plumptre was most magnanimous. As Chair he had, I believe, a right of reply, or perhaps as mover of the motion Anyhow he was very complimentary. 'This motion,' he said, ‘ has been encountered by a new and unknown member from the other end of the room ’—(I had stood low down, near the door)—‘ in a very witty speech, and from the nearer benches by a sample of folly beneath contempt.’ (Here he was understood to refer to the unfortunate ‘ scraped down ’ as aforesaid.) He was also good enough to treat me in the most gracious manner as a novice who had made a hit. I got a good many congratulations that evening besides the threefold blackballing was forgotten : and husbanding the prestige thus acquired, I was unanimously elected to the next vacancy on the committee, though it was against the rule, I believe, for a man so to serve in his first term of membership. Subsequently I became secretary and treasurer and should, by rotation, have succeeded to the chair, but I was taking my degree and expecting ordination, so that I went out of residence. Plumptre became professor at King's College, London, and died Dean of Wells : he had a fine classical taste and will be remembered for his translations of Aeschylus and other graceful literary pieces. He had occupied the chair on this particular evening as an ex-president, the actual President being G. F. Bowen of Trinity, who rose as Sir George Bowen to be governor in succession of Queensland, New Zealand, Victoria, Mauritius and Hong Kong.

“ Such episodes were highly characteristic of our Oxford youth. The charming headlong readiness to ‘ swear a feud,’ in which a blackballing match *à l'outrance* took the place of bloodshed ; the blindfold devotion with which a leader would be followed ; the indignant earnestness of a thoughtful section against the laxity of newspaper morals ; together with the serious attempt, if quixotic, to embody that feeling practically ; the rough-and-ready method with a bore or a prig ; and above all the generous welcome to what was held to be merit, however mistaken the diagnosis, in a stranger-knight with a blank shield ;—all combine to make a picture of academic manners which seems to me worth preserving.

"My term as treasurer of the Union," Dr. Hayman continues, "covered the greater part of the year 1847: but in addition to this, with G. R. Portal of Christ Church and W. K. R. Bedford of Brasenose, I had taken some part in revising the rules. We were constituted as a special committee for this purpose. An even more important matter was the great question of adequate housing for the society. We did not get very far in my time, but the first, the fundamental step, that of providing the necessary funds, was taken: the plans were even in a forward state when I went out of residence in 1848: and that perhaps was enough for one treasurer's period of office. The inconvenience—of not being in a house of our own and effective masters of it—was curiously illustrated by the visit of the British Association during the Long Vacation of 1848. We had offered our hospitality. But Vincent, bookseller, of whom we rented, having possession of the keys, maintained an attitude of resistance. I was resolved that the resolution of the society should not be baffled. I was the only officer in residence. So I sent for a locksmith and remember standing over him while he broke the lock with a hammer. The learned body was duly entertained, and Vincent acquiesced in his defeat."

The further episodes in which Dr. Hayman shared must be dovetailed with the notes and reflections of others. Amongst these was Drummond Percy Chase of Oriel, the late Principal of St. Mary Hall, mover of the amendment already quoted. With St. John's and with "Skimmery" (now merged in Oriel) the material fortunes of the Union were thus indirectly connected. The predecessor of Chase in his headship, Dr. Philip Bliss, had been a Fellow of St. John's, and as such he was naturally in league with the assiduous, enterprising Hayman. To these two men the Union was to be especially indebted for all time, because they had some imagination and because they looked well ahead. It was given to Dr. Bliss to act even more definitely. He must be reckoned with founders and benefactors. Periodically—in 1873, in 1893, in 1903, in 1923—stock had to be taken of possible developments, of needs unsatisfied, but always with the same result—the Union could never be permitted to stand still. The time came when the Union, needing the prompt use of money, resorted to borrowing. With great perspicacity, Dr. Bliss devised a scheme, gave it his own backing, and laid the society under an obligation to himself which cannot be too gratefully recognized. Having found a suitable property in the heart of Oxford, he set to work to secure it: suggested that graduates of the University should come in as life-members for a single payment of £10, a proposition which was freely taken up: and, when the scheme of purchase was well started, offered a loan of £3,000 on generous terms in order that it might be completed.

These plans were not matured for several years, and in the meantime the relations with Mr. Vincent were somewhat strained: but the debates in Wyatt's Rooms hardly suffered intermission. The struggles over unpopular newspapers tested the temper of the few or the many. *Bell's Life* had to be considered as usual. Even the patient and kind-hearted Chase mused thoughtfully, regretfully, over his lapse from decency and circumspection when he remembered how he had ironically urged the continuance of the *Record*, an evangelical journal—on the ground that *comic* papers being allowed, *this* should be allowed among them. "Indefensible insolence!" So he recanted, some fifty years later. Nor had he forgotten the "quiet, dignified rebuke" administered by J. G. Cazenove, then President. This name was a temptation to the wags. They used to chant a sort of refrain:—"*Cāzenose of Brāzenose!*" Their victim adopted the pronunciation "*Căzenove*" in remonstrance, and asked his friends to do the same. He was a man who filled several important ecclesiastical posts in later life, for he contributed socially and generally to the intellectual strength of the Scottish capital. And he became Provost of Cumbrae.

As Hayman of Rugby had discovered, election to the society in his day was by no means a formality. Eventually, however, the blackballing system reached annulment. Membership of the University was to become a sufficient passport to the Union: a thing thoroughly reasonable and advisable, just as exclusiveness had been the reverse. Of course such universality as this might breed a certain contempt for the Union and all its works. That contempt, in fact, did intervene, did grow; nor has it ever been completely scotched and killed. The greatest advantages of the Union were always priceless. Moneyed interests are completely nonplussed by such a factor. It may be true that in representative capacity the Union has never quite covered its natural field, for it should have become, if only by degrees, co-extensive with the University, adding to this general function something of its own which the University itself could never give. At one time, men found it too difficult to belong to the Union, though possessing every qualification. At other times, with qualifications the barest, men found admission too easy. Still, even when exclusiveness had its way, luxury was hardly thought of. The shallow purse of the average man was always carefully considered. When improvements were made, the subscription remained low. Taken as a whole, it may be said that few institutions in the country have ever given such advantages as the Oxford Union at so moderate a price. The Union never had any formal endowment, but it was largely due to the wisdom shown by those who conducted its affairs at the time under review that favourable arrangements for the acquirement of property and for its control were made.

The name which stands first on the roll of trustees is that of Philip Bliss, D.C.L., Principal of St. Mary Hall. By a deed, dated the 1st July, 1847, all the property of the society was then vested in four trustees: Dr. Bliss being joined by Dr. J. A. Ogle, Aldrichian Professor of Medicine; Mr. M. J.

Johnson, Radcliffe Observer; and Dr. (afterwards Sir) H. W. Acland. These gentlemen entered with zest upon their duties, and with their appointment the Union embarked on a new course of activity and prosperity, for under such auspices it became clear that in due time the arrangements at Wyatt's and Vincent's would come to an end, and though there would always remain a glamour of memory about the old quarters in the "High," fresh hopes were raised by the prospect of transference to the neighbourhood of the "Corn." Even so, actual possession of the new premises, which consisted of a house with a garden, the building adaptable to some but by no means to all the purposes of the Union, was delayed until 1852, and it was not until 1853 that the plans for the first debating hall were made.

These years of the 'forties were certainly fruitful of good speaking in those old rooms in the "High." The late Canon Lewis Macnaghten Humbert of Winchester, a former Master of the ancient Hospital of St. Cross, would speak to the present writer of these very times with a keen satisfaction and pride: though, with characteristic humility and modesty, he bated his breath when he spoke of some old Oxford friends whose part in life had been so much more conspicuous than his own. So far from over-praising their time, he said—looking round the Union fifty years later—that "in the old days we did things in a very quiet way compared with the magnificent ideas of later generations: but we old ones seem to shine with a reflected glory from the light of to-day!" There came before him the vision of "the rooms where I believe the more recent buildings of University now stand—they were of a very extemporary character as compared with the present palace." As for the men: Parnell he could vouch for as a ready debater, and Parnell dealt, *inter alia*, with vexed questions like political privileges for Jews, a concession which the Union for a very long time with the intensest feeling opposed. Humbert himself, with Congreve of Wadham, the famous Positivist, joined as vehemently against any facilities of a public nature for the Hebrew race. Yet at the same time a whole party was veering towards other freedoms as only fair and reasonable. One straw or so would show the direction of the stream. Once, at least, Ireland had been encouraged to hope for such a thing as the cultivation of her own native language. Ireland in one form or another was constantly patronized or scolded, blamed or pitied. This reflects great credit on the innate altruism of men in search of a creed. Opinion was generally rigid. We are dealing with a very "old-fashioned" Oxford. But feeling, on the whole, swung to and fro; as though the problems of mankind were real and troublesome, but rightly and wisely to be tried and studied in youth, and by the light of definite principles to be examined, analysed, compared. Certainly the shadow of ecclesiastical prejudices played over everything: but this was a moving shadow, no permanent obstruction. For secular changes were coming which could not be escaped. Meanwhile, at the Union, topical agitations were sometimes set aside for remoter academic themes. The year 1840, for instance, went out with a discussion on the Venetian Republics: the year 1841 with a debate on the political character of Themistocles.

There would seem to have been, between 1841 and 1845 and throughout this decade, a current of interest sufficiently alluring to draw the scholar of parts and promise. The "essayist" type of speaker had his own particular place. When Mansel spoke, it was on such a subject as the character or the fate of Archbishop Laud: coming from St. John's, he might naturally hold a brief for the prelate, might manifest him as a hero. Mansel had already stored a vigorous mind with a vast amount of recondite information. He could either rise to metaphysical problems or he could deviate into the poor-law. With ready wit he could sustain any theme and even astonish those who were supposed to be teaching him. For with such a man the position of preceptor and learner would be reversed. The same might be said of Conington of Magdalen. Mansel did not seek office in the Union, but Conington was successively secretary, librarian, and President. These men had nothing of flashiness about them: the more facile attractiveness of the orator passed them by. Indeed, Dr. Hayman observed the limitations of a Conington rather pointedly. His powers of expression were marred by a halting delivery. Yet he spoke with authority. But men could not help quizzing him for his oddities, for his physical peculiarities, and as "the sick vulture" he was generally known. But no man was ever to do higher service to Oxford than this disseminator of fine Latinity through one instrument, one channel not less noble than the classical tongue. It is a proud reflection for the Oxford Union that such gifts as Conington's were employed in the common service, and that recognition, gladly given, was with equal gladness accepted by him.

Not only from scholars of exceptional gifts did the Union draw a continuous inspiration and benefit. "My immediate predecessor as treasurer," so writes Dr. Hayman, with a gleam of inherited pride, "had been G. Ward Hunt of Christ Church—a tall, heavy-hipped man with a handsome face in which good sense and good nature blended. We often met in committee and of course became good friends; and I called and lunched with him more than once at the Admiralty when he was First Lord under Mr. Disraeli. His chief reputation as an undergraduate rested on his racquet-play, in which length of reach gave him a decided advantage. It was said that he had offered to play any man in Oxford with a boot-jack. As President of the Union, or at any rate as Chairman Vice-president, he had unruffled good-humour, and a manner which always carried weight. Somewhat similar was Wharton Booth Marriott, afterwards an assistant-master at Eton, and, like Hunt and Parnell before-mentioned, cut off by premature death."

Of the debates at this period, Dr. Chase, for his part, would add reflectively how much better the speaking had been 'before Agamemnon." But is it a fact, he inquires, that eloquence "improves in bottle"? He comforted himself by the thought that nothing can be more elusive. "But the value of the opportunities afforded by the debates," he added, "to any who would take a little trouble, could hardly be overrated. One remembers one's first attempts. A sudden silence which *you* were to break, seemed to paralyse the tongue, even if it did not banish the ideas. Use, however, remedied this; and enabled a man to say, at least intelligibly, what he has to say." So there came to be many who gradually gained practice in the art of letting themselves go. Some enlarged on the character, once again, of Queen Elizabeth, whom a majority declared to have been "an able tyrant." Others were concerned with Richard the Third, Cardinal Richelieu, Algernon Sidney, Admiral Byng: whilst Cromwell still, in a sense, carried all before him, for he could not be disposed of in the summer of 1845 in less than three evenings and then his merits were "sufficiently acknowledged" after some twenty speeches, by Cazenove's casting vote. Others were concerned with such burning questions as the right of a Secretary of State to tamper with correspondence, as in the case of the illustrious Giuseppe Mazzini. Were James Watt and the steam-engine a blessing or a curse? By a narrow vote, the Union thought them beneficial. Byron was considered, as a poet, always with partiality; a glance was taken at Macaulay as a prose-writer. Dickens in his capacity as social reformer, gathered blame rather than praise. The mission of Milton, the genius of Chatterton, received consideration.

Thus were brought to the test many possibilities of rising talent as well as emancipation of thought, practically exploiting the hidden opportunities of Oxford life and supplementing the work of the schools, which scholars, even of Stanley's type, had sometimes found lacking in proportion or shackled by unintelligent restrictions. Now it was a Mackarness of

Merton, later Bishop of Oxford—now a Sandford of Balliol, afterwards Lord Sandford—now a Pott of Magdalen, successful as an *oculus episcopi*— these entered the field and made good. Here, too, the names of two Christ Church brothers, Melville and George Portal, stand out. Both shone conspicuously in the Union and carried their success into their Hampshire life. An Alexander, a Skeffington, a Powles, maintained the credit of Exeter and Worcester: and for a dash of Hibernian influence, as indicated by two of these names, the Union was none the worse. Life at Oxford became the fuller, too. In this connexion, as the late Mr. W. K. R. Bedford pointed out, the abler sort of man in Oxford was at a disadvantage. If he felt crippled by the system, he did not trouble to make terms with academic rigidity. "In 1846 the School of Law and History did not yet exist. . . . The curriculum in favour with the plodding don was, as Sydney Smith once said, 'devoid of any particle of entertainment,' and the diligent son of Alma Mater fed on as dry provender as if he had robbed his prodigal brother of his diet of husks. Reginald Heber laboured under a reproach at the University of having no taste for critical knowledge: long after Heber's day the most brilliant orator and poet among Irish churchmen (Alexander) was pronounced not scholar enough, and too irregular in his conduct for his tutor's ideal, and was debarred, so far as the censorial power of his original college extended, from those distinctions of which his after-life has afforded such a harvest. The better day of common sense was only dawning in the 'forties, and the Union was to some extent under the same influence, which strove to perpetuate the tradition of Pegasus in harness."

In the Union, however, another figure—Irish too, in a sense—became more prominent at this time than Alexander's. "Tuft," as a term, barely survives in memory at Oxford now, except in the expression—"tuft-hunter." The velvet cap with gold tassel and a wide-sleeved silk gown was the undress collegiate garb of a nobleman. Of these, Mr. Bedford speaks as not extinct in his day. He adds that great expectations had been aroused when it was known that Dufferin of Christ Church, Sheridan's grandson, intended to become a debater. "Lord Dufferin's face was rather sad and thoughtful—a fateful visage, like Vandyke's King Charles. . . . It was generally admitted that he could speak in a fashion which had the recommendation of being as unlike the conventional declaimer as possible."

Lord Dufferin possessed from the outset of his Oxford career the characteristics of the polished courtier and diplomatist. Dr. Hayman recorded with appreciation his delicate method of conveying a reproof to a negligent member of his committee. Others could vouch for his general usefulness at the Union. The name—"Earl of Dufferin, Christ Church" —is recorded as holding the office of President in the year 1847. His maiden speech had been delivered in May 1846, the subject being Poland, in favour of which country he had elected to speak against Sclater of Balliol, later Lord Basing: here, the sympathy he had expressed for the Polish cause was proved to be acceptable. Dufferin's next appearance reflected a critical attitude towards "modern theatricals, as detrimental to the morals of the age." An amendment which pleaded a less censorious view was rejected without a division, the original motion being carried by two to one. A "fast set" was supposed to be invading the Union. Serious people in the University and outside it were very fond of condemning the stage. Could a Christian lawfully enjoy a farce? Tracts were circulated very freely in those days. One of them was entitled "The Way to the Pit." It had a very special theatrical appeal, no doubt: but the influence of these moral extremists was on the wane. The members of Lord Dufferin's nominated committee were by no means allowed to have things all their own way: there came a new infusion of liberal feeling: and the anti-theatrical element was gently and appropriately put in its proper place. Dufferin himself had also set in motion a proposal which brought further criticism upon him. This idea of his was greatly to his credit. It will be remembered that once upon a time the society had granted money for the relief of Irish distress. Dufferin, with his friend Boyle (afterwards Earl of Glasgow) had paid a visit to Skibbereen and had brought back the most sorrowful impressions from the famine-stricken districts. But the rules of the society, as we have seen, had been revised: and an adopted rule—Rule 70—had made anything like philanthropy unconstitutional. The amount involved was a mere matter of five pounds. But a debate, second to none for animation in the annals of the Union, drew a crowded attendance. Lord Dufferin moved the gift to Ireland of the five pounds. He was opposed.

"The room," says Mr. Bedford, "was filled not only by the younger members of the University, but by older and graver men not often to be found there. One form is not likely to escape remembrance—of square and sturdy build, clad in a master's gown—Thomson, Fellow of Queen's—shortly destined to attract Lord Palmerston's notice and to become Primate of the Northern Province. James Fraser, also, subsequently Bishop of Manchester, then Fellow of Oriel, was among the dissentients; but the most determined of all the opponents was Tom Collins of Wadham, who had, it was whispered, some legal document in his pocket ready to serve upon the treasurer in case the motion should be carried."

The motion was lost. Dufferin, whose prestige as President-elect was considerable, could not persuade the House. Collins, with his reputation for eccentricity and taciturnity, which he took with him very soon after into the House of Commons, came out of his shell and proved his case by a logical assertion of it; and in this he was supported by temperate men like Chase. "If earnestness and eloquence of pleading could have gained the day, there is no doubt that the President-elect would have succeeded. He spoke far better than he had ever done before." Stanton, of Balliol, President, was appealed to—" to stop arguments addressed to the feelings of the House "—which obviously responded to such feelings, nevertheless. Rule 70 was vindicated in the end, Thomson's amendment winning by 151 votes. A wave of sympathy with Ireland went through Oxford all the same. An association was even formed to give help to the sufferers by the famine. But the Union had adopted a very sensible resolution. " To vote away funds for charitable purposes would have been inequitable and possibly illegal." Yet the proposal itself, as made, may serve to gild the memory of Dufferin within the Union. " If," remarks Mr. Bedford, " like Eugene of Savoy and Benjamin Disraeli, his first lance was broken unsuccessfully, he lived to compel the admiration of a world." Not that the experiences even of a Dufferin were wholly unmarred. As these reminiscences show—" there is no place like Oxford to show that the race of life is not to the swift. Amongst those who took part in this scene, how varied was the ratio of success in after life! The eloquent Bishop of Derry failed in his second candidature for the Union Committee—while our popular orator, that best of epigrammatic debaters, Ralph Benson, never secured a seat in Parliament, though he tried several times."

How varied was the ratio of success! But the galaxy of worthy names during this period of the 'forties shines all the brighter for the presence in the Union of John Duke Coleridge of Balliol, a man who was typical of success, but typical of limitation too: which is the reason for having reserved all mention of his personality until now. Our various memorialists all agree in according the need of special worth to one who possessed, from the outset, nearly all the advantages which an Oxford man may hope to command. " Pre-eminent among us was Coleridge, afterwards Lord Chief Justice of

England," says Dr. Chase. "He would have caught the eye of anyone. Tall, with really golden hair and the smile which was lifelong, though, I have heard, with a capacity for any expression, he seemed to be carrying all before him. He looked like a winner, and this he was. He had, as a speaker, every advantage: height without awkwardness; a beautiful voice; a grand manner; self esteem, *quantum suff.*: of the best language an easy flow—'like honey trickling down.'"

Coleridge, on coming up to Balliol, had found himself a pupil of Tait, who struck him as over-donnish. He mingled with the best spirits of his time, especially in the "Decade." He took his own good fortune very happily. "I deny *in toto*," he wrote to his father, "that there exists anywhere a greater man than a scholar of Balliol." Oxford provided him with many interests. He listened to Keble or Newman, basking in their apostolic radiance; he was critical, however, of the average political creed; it chanced that during the vacations he had a special opportunity of studying the seamy side of existence as his father's marshal. This brought him into contact with Chartism—it was in defence of the Chartists that he made his first appearance in the Union. The judge, his father, grew quite anxious on account of "John's ability as a speaker." He thought of him as "surrounded by snares in his own conversational habits, general knowledge, desultory habits of reading." But Coleridge, the son, held his own, in his own way. In the Union, he became "the star of the house." A London newspaper, the *Morning Post*, singled him out on one occasion because of his opposition to privilege over a notorious case—wherein "the Radicals were all for privilege, the Tories all concerned for the liberty of the subject." In this affair a publisher of the name of Stockdale had been committed to prison, and, as a consequence, even the sheriffs had incurred a similar penalty, whilst the very judges had almost been impugned. This was a business the ingenious young Coleridge might well revel in: the Union could be induced to declare that " the recent proceedings of the House of Commons were utterly subversive of the Constitution." Coleridge was heard, appraised and praised in a crowded gathering. His arguments were pronounced convincing by a competent authority. If criticism should touch so remarkable a performance, the speaker had, it was hinted, too little variation of tone, too little action, Of his language it could be said that it was forceful and even beautiful, with a voice most musical ; of his appearance, that it was entirely gracious and prepossessing.

Coleridge continued to make a good impression at the Union as time went on. That he would succeed greatly in life was evident to all, though even when he was urged to be called to the bar, few would have forecast his actual shaping. " You won't be quite in your proper place in the House of Lords "—so wrote one of his most gifted contemporaries, John Campbell Shairp, in 1873, when the wheel had come full circle. As Matthew Arnold chaffingly said about the same time, if his friend went on rising, his (Arnold's) proper place would be in the servants' hall. But with all his privileges, his ample income, his valuable books, his general equipment for life, Coleridge as a man was never entirely spoiled. He found himself, through illness at Oxford, debarred from honours in the schools. He tried for the Newdigate without result : in verses rather sadly introspective he sought to excuse himself for wasted energies and empty dreams : but Exeter thought enough of him to give him a fellowship. He had held his own in societies wherein men had got into the habit of fighting " to the stumps of their intellects." In the Union he had done something more than hold his own, for the speeches he had made showed a real progressiveness, and he had left a reputation which many another man would strive to emulate : and this was an augury full of promise for the future.

CHAPTER VII

FROM 1840 TO 1850: THE UNION OFFERS A FIELD TO MANY TALENTS

EVIDENCE in plenty might here be brought forward to prove that the Union at Oxford between 1840 and 1850 was not rising, but that it was falling; that it had too few really promising orators and too many that were merely performing; that its information was copious but that it possessed no real knowledge; that a great deal of valuable time was spent in acquiring just that kind of reputation which of all reputations is the least satisfactory, because the most evanescent; in short, that for those who believed in it the Union represented the best, but for those who didn't, the worst of the various Oxford worlds. A Dickens-like juxtaposition!

Dickens, the Oxford Union had already discounted to a certain extent. No finality, of course, attached to such a judgment, which had been pronounced on the reformer, not on the writer, whose parallels so often convey their own lesson. There were other men, and still more there were other movements, to be discounted with more reason by those active at this particular juncture. Agreement in some things it might be hard to arrive at. One thing was sure, that by the year 1847, the initial force of the original Tractarian movement had waned. At the Union, too? Yes and no. As will be seen directly, the Union had its political preoccupations and tried to cultivate all the possibilities of a secular field which grew steadily wider. But within this area an acerbity of religious tinge was somehow latent, in spite of any repudiation of theology. Ecclesiastical polemics had been bred in the very stones of Oxford, and temperaments, kindred temperaments, had to be very specially considered. In " private business " there remained a privilege not to be disregarded. A humble evangelical journal—or the old vexed question of opening the room on Sundays—or again, the mere title of a religious book, might call men out as to battle, and nobody could deny that principles were really involved. In debate, another loophole presented itself : the loophole of historical discussion. History could bristle with religious rancour : and there was bound, by the very nature of things (till interest should actually wane), through the influence also of professions which men were likely to choose, to be a great deal in the minds of possible disputants which simply had to find an outlet.

Meanwhile, in Oxford itself, other things were being considered. The year 1847 marks a time of flux, of important changes. The country was growing more and more industrial. A network of machinery, spreading everywhere, fascinated the population. " Controversy," said a clever Oxford observer, " has worn itself out. The *ferrea via* attracts even the clergy more than the *via media*." That might be an exaggeration : but the tendencies of the time were as clear as they were various. The University did not stand still. It was, as a teaching body, being badgered out of its breath by pressure in the direction of reform. This alone was to prove a fertile field for the Union for many a year. New examinations were being introduced. New schools and faculties were foreshadowed. Coleridge, who had noted as early as 1842 that the figures on the " Martyrs' Memorial "—figures of the very greatest significance—were " ascending to their perches," had also rejoiced at the founding of what he supposed was to be " a modern college " opposite Balliol. He referred to the Taylorian Institution, which did, in 1847, actually procure a monetary grant and the formal sanction of the University. In this same summer, the British Association was received, as we have seen ; nor had the Union been backward in the welcome given. It was said that Lucien Bonaparte herein, as a philosopher, actually named a new species of bat (which as a naturalist he had discovered) "Rhedycincus"—out of compliment to Oxford, "anciently called 'Rhedycina.'" It would be carrying allusiveness too far to speak of Oxford as bat-eyed: but there was always (perhaps there still is) a certain amount of obscurantism to be fought where prejudice often takes the short view and privilege has a long arm. Incidentally it should be mentioned that 1847 was the year of the attack on Dr. Hampden, appointed to the bishopric of Hereford: and also the year of a great political contest between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Round for the representation of the University. To this contest Mr. Gladstone went forth, having received the Union's blessing in June. The election took place hotly in the hottest days of July: Mr. Gladstone receiving 997 votes against 824 cast for his opponent. On such matters the Union kept a special eye, and though it might be said that these years between 1840 and 1850 were not prolific of great excitement, there came a certain inflow of fresh men and fresh interests. From the time of Sir George Bowen onwards, through men like Lord Dufferin, Sir M. E. Grant-Duff, and Sir Robert Morier, the issues of foreign politics gradually obtained more attention: amongst able men, attainment of office in the Union continued to be highly prized. It appears to have been an easy thing to reach an official post, once the lower rungs of the ladder had been climbed. There were frequent contests, however, for places on the Union Committee. By systematic "choice of fit persons," it sometimes fell out that nomination became more important than election: but it seldom happened that a President filled the office more than once. It was therefore with a communicable joy that Sir George Bowen wrote, more than fifty years after the event:—"I am one of the very few who had the honour of being twice chosen to fill the President's chair—once in 1843, when I was an Undergraduate

Scholar of Trinity, and once in 1844 when I was a B.A. Fellow of Brasenose."

Lord Dufferin looked back, too, after a similar interval. Here he threw light on the scene which had thrown a strong one on himself, a scene which many thought had inaugurated an entirely new era, financially, for the Union. On what really happened, Lord Dufferin had his own particular views. Writing just half-a-century later from the British Embassy, Paris, he said :—" I am very proud of having served as President of the Union for a short period, and I have a recollection of a tremendous debate in which some of my friends and I endeavoured, very improperly I now admit, to lay hold of the funds of the Union for transmission to the sufferers by the famine in Ireland. We had a majority in our favour among the undergraduate members, but curates and elderly clergymen were whipped up from the country by our opponents, and their sager and less hysterical counsels prevailed. The attendance was so large that the doors which separated the part of the long room which usually sufficed for our meetings, had to be taken away, and the whole space utilized." . . . The present writer, to whom these notes were communicated, visited these rooms behind Rowell's the jewellers in High Street, in the centenary year of the Union, and found them placed at the disposal of the " Society of Friends." It was easy to conjure up the old scenes in spite of windows altered and partitions rearranged. Reading then between the lines, it is pleasant to dwell on the eminent diplomatist's pride in the Union and to note that as far as his defeated motion was concerned, he felt wholly unrepentant. It happened that he added a note of regret because of the brevity of his Union " career." But he had taken his degree " after only a year and a half's residence." Such feats were possible then.

In the estimation of others, and they were fairly observant people, the famous Dufferin motion had been the direct cause of the re-establishment of the Union on sounder financial lines. Of course the decision itself had only been a triumph for the regular, the conventional, the constitutional. To vote money away in that fashion, even for Ireland—naturally enough, Ireland could always produce entanglements in a situation with which it had nothing whatever to do—would have created a precedent, and that is a terrible thing. More naturally still, it was probably an illegal Irish precedent that had put the generous idea into Dufferin's head. In the end, even a Hibernian sense of justice must have felt satisfied. As to this business of the Union buildings, it is true enough that trustees were now to be appointed. Also that the constitutional position would henceforward be protected. So that deeds of mercy would be suitably relegated to regions unconnected . . . with deeds of trust. But there were many causes for the changes now imminent. Not a few public-spirited individuals, more particularly Bliss, Hayman, and Shirley, were concerned in supplying a manifest need. All became doctors of divinity in later life. They deserved some distinction, but, for the Union, they were happy in being supported by the hopes and prospects of the time. Meanwhile, the diplomatic group alone formed a factor of growing importance. Cosmopolitan activities were often characteristic of men who would devote their future lives to important work abroad.

These, men, too were very sympathetically observed by others. One of them, Sir Mountstuart Grant-Duff, was a diligent diarist, and in a letter which fixes certain dates, he mentions that of his election to the Union—February 10, 1848. He adds: " My first vote was given on a motion brought forward by John Conington, in favour of taking in the *Westminster Review*, which had been excluded on account of an article about D. F. Strauss. . . . One might be writing about the Middle Ages ! " The cultivation, by this distinguished *alumnus* of Balliol, of *la haute politique* is the subject of comment by another gifted and methodical contemporary,

G. D. Boyle of Exeter, who became Dean of Salisbury—preserving throughout his life many an affectionate memory of the Union and its leading lights. (He was himself President for the Easter Term of 1849.) "Grant-Duff showed, in those early days," says Dean Boyle, "a great familiarity with foreign politics." Prebendary Meyrick, also a member of Trinity and Boyle's immediate predecessor as President, was struck by Grant-Duff's contributions to debate. "He spoke generally on subjects of modern history, with which his audience was little acquainted." In every generation, luckily for the Union, there has been a sprinkling in Oxford of specialists of this sort. Often family connexions or literary leanings have brought young men into early touch with cosmopolitan problems. Speaking of the month of February, 1848, already referred to, Grant-Duff himself said: "I see I made my maiden speech in public business in support of a motion by Morier, then like myself an undergraduate at Balliol :—'That the state of Europe is such as to require that England should have diplomatic relations with the Court at Rome'—an opinion, by the way I hold as firmly now (1897) as I did then." Those were the days of Pio Nono: the condition of Europe made it imperative that young men should endeavour to understand international complications: above all, as in the present time, to decide whether they should be good Europeans or not — with this difference, that such a question then, especially in Oxford, touched certain religious prepossessions. Grant-Duff's mind ranged easily over the Austro-Hungarian imbroglio, too. Mr. Alfred Watson, the late Principal of Brasenose, described his speeches as "very finished compositions; occasionally rhetorical in form, but based on most remarkable historical knowledge. Indeed, his success as a debater perhaps suffered from his assuming too much knowledge of, and too much interest in, foreign affairs —as existing among his hearers. Debate suffered, from the want of competent critics." The speaker himself recalled with gusto his defence on April 26, 1848, of the revolted Hungarians. In this he was opposed by Professor Gardiner, and the two men did not meet again till the later 'nineties, half a century later! Then Gardiner rallied his opponent on the episode. "Ah, but we beat you!" was Grant-Duff's comment, "for I carried my motion": and the speech by which the vote had been secured had made such an impression on the Principal of Brasenose that the latter could repeat the gist of it, and did so, "fifty years on." Apart from debate, European affairs generally in these times drew crowds to the Union to hear the latest news. Between 1848 and 1850, indeed, Grant-Duff, as a keen European, intervened on a great variety of subjects in debate. He was an authority on French, Italian, Indian topics—on these last he once moved a resolution deploring indifference towards India as prejudicial to the interests of the Empire. He shared too, in some warm contests over the committee, of which he was a member for some time with Lygon, afterwards Earl Beauchamp, and with Philip Sclater the well-known zoologist—the man who used to exhibit his collections of stuffed birds at breakfast: and, as the same group was notable also for the inclusion of Wetherell of Brasenose, Liddon of Christ Church, and H. N. Oxenham of Balliol, the general interchange of ideas was often interesting, even brilliant, coloured by a far-reaching and intelligent sympathy, with that positive and sometimes dominant religious prepossession of the age constantly asserting itself, especially in men like Oxenham.

Those who observed these men contrasted them. Wetherell, who held the office of treasurer in 1852, had a certain vigour in his methods of meeting an opponent, and his gift of sarcasm was considerable. He sometimes took a delight in riling the house, so Mr. R. E. Bartlett of Trinity averred. "Once a member complained that there was not a copy of the Bible in the Library: to which the librarian replied that he did not think this necessary, as of course every member had a Bible in his rooms. Whereat Wetherell, having lately joined the Church of Rome, sprang to his feet and exclaimed vehemently: ' Sir, I deny that statement. I am proud to say that I have *not* a Bible in my rooms.' " A breeze was easily stirred by such an assertion. But Wetherell not infrequently contributed to the gaiety of the proceedings in one way or another. Many years later a member from Wadham, the gifted William Plenderleath, for many years Rector of Mamhead near Exeter, pictured Wetherell vividly, as he remembered him in the Union. He described him as a speaker of the rhetorical class. " Not without literary grace and polish, but something of a copyist of Liddon, who spoke with great effect but was regarded as beyond the measure of his hearers, in fact, something of a don. Liddon had, even then, a power of expressing himself in the most beautiful English." The testimony of Mr. Plenderleath, who often heard him at the Union, is supported by many others. Liddon always came fully prepared. His style revealed a wide—" almost omnivorous "—reading. Wetherell, on one occasion especially recalled, succeeded in overreaching himself. " Standing by the Secretary's table, which represented the Clerk's table in the House of Commons, he spouted some rather cheap heroics about crumbling empires and tottering thrones, when Collier of Oriel, a very well known man, much by way of being a '*grand farceur*,' came up from behind and with a loud drawl asked—' Would you kindly let me pass, please ? '—and then strolled down the gangway with his gown on his arm so held as to trail behind him (which gowns could do in those remote days, especially that of a scholar, which Collier was). First one man tittered—then many—and Wetherell, after harking back in vain to the crumbling empires, finished by breaking down altogether, to Collier's exceeding delight." Bartlett, who reached the President's chair later on, records how Wetherell arranged on some pretext or other to impeach him for his conduct when in office. Bartlett went to George

Brodrick of Balliol for advice. "The Viper must be crushed," said Brodrick with the greatest possible solemnity. Doubtless the crushing, which duly ensued, was completely metaphorical. This was all in the fitness of things. The metaphorical ingenuity of Wetherell was long remembered in the Union, tinctured with that strange regretful feeling which always attached in those days to men who ventured on sands that seemed to be shifting. But these reflections are really more to the point in connexion with Oxenham.

Oxenham's theories and predilections were of the time, timely. They may even "point a moral and adorn a tale." As a speaker, he was considered hardly inferior to Liddon in respect of language. But Mr. Plenderleath records that he did not deliver his speeches so well, for he seldom if ever raised his eyes from the floor, and recited, rather than spoke. In all questions that he approached, the outstanding fact remained that religion in history possessed a tenacious past, and he developed this theory regardless of the consequences to himself. In Oxford, and in the Union especially, other theories, other principles were being deeply considered. The Positivist school of thought was not only rising : it was gaining many adherents. Thus there were intensities of feeling awake. A broadening tone had become noticeable in the debates. The names of Congreve, Beesly, Harrison and Bridges were all coming forward—a formidable array of talent from Wadham. On the other hand a man like Oxenham, inspired, as it seemed, in the main, by reactionary ideas, was credited with aims which in the prevailing sense were simply revolutionary. He was listened to with respect, because he thought well and spoke well—allowance being made for peculiarities. But he was heard by many with suspicion. There is a kind of suspicion which sometimes grows furious, breaks bounds, may affect a man for life. Here is an actual case of a man who was pretty well broken by a single speech. Oxenham had already spoken caustically enough in the Union on the subject of King Henry the Eighth :—" The man of corrupt life : yet the so-called 'Defender of the Faith.'" That was an omen, which an unfavourable wind might blow against the critic. But when, with the " eloquent earnestness" of which he was a master, Oxenham actually moved that " the Company of Jesus had deserved well of the Church and of mankind"—there were those who whispered—" he will die a Jesuit." The whisper carried far. The Union duly elected Oxenham to the presidency, a tribute to his abilities and a proof of the tolerance for which the Union stood. But Oxenham's academic doom was sealed. One college after another refused him a fellowship, up to the number, possibly, of ten. This was a great pity. Such a spirit, gifted and eager, would have found opportunities in Oxford. . . . He knew that . . . He felt it deeply . . . " It was pathetic to the last to see how he clung to Oxford, and would go there on a few days' visit to men far his juniors as his contemporaries disappeared." Yet the system which he actually adopted *he* never fully accepted : it was equally doubtful whether that system ever fully adopted *him*. Oxenham went out into the world, used a moderate fortune wisely, wrote clever articles for the *Saturday Review*. His frankness at the Union had made him the victim of a policy of repression. There was a story afloat that he had been smoked out of a meeting at Merton by burning cayenne pepper : a little society for essay-reading—consecrated to King Alfred—having arisen among a few of the keener members of the Union. The " Alfred Society" never recovered from that ordeal. Nor did Oxenham ever quite recover from the larger infliction of pain which followed for his expression of what were, after all, indeterminate views. Indeterminate, this man's particular views were always to remain. But the incidents of his career have a definite bearing on the question of tolerance in religious matters : one which is not settled in Oxford yet ; though time has brought great changes. In Oxenham's time, and for many years to come, the search for truth by means of open discussion, so sternly frowned upon when the Union was first started, was not the most prudent course for a clever Oxford man to pursue. Oxenham, in fact, left behind him memories of a character anything but worldly-wise, of a vivid personality also, " whose torrents of talk were proof of a mind quivering with mental energy, wherein always, he showed his intense Oxonianism." This, at any rate, was the impression of one who admired him and refused to write him down as a failure. Such a personality reflects a halo of its own over the Union " Chair."

The school of Positivists has already been mentioned. Anything of this kind, of course, must in a sense be classed with Liberalism. " Every boy and every girl. . . . That's born into this world alive . . . Is either a little Liberal . . . Or else a little Conserva*tive* "—has passed into one of the most acceptable proverbs of Gilbertian wisdom : it is difficult not to anticipate its retrospective force in Oxford, with the necessary difference. Here one looks at controversial talent which, with all its limitations, never proved futile. Men often came into the Union not quite sure how to class themselves. As for being proverbially born Liberal or Conservative—well, many an intellectual man, in this Victorian epoch, was more concerned as to how he should be born again. This question had intrigued Oxenham in one sense. It intrigued Pearson of Oriel in another. Pearson, as a memorialist, threw some light on the Union, and on his own development, which was, perhaps, typical.

Memorialists often differ amongst themselves even when they are dealing with the same time and theme. But common to all are an interest and a glamour as youth and its potentialities appear or reappear. Pearson could be very candid about Oxford. He mentions, for instance, that in his day there were good colleges and bad. It was a toss-up whether you could get any good out of Oxford or not. He saw how easy it would be to give too much time to the Union, and when the work connected with the provision of the new buildings threatened to become heavy, he obtained leave of absence from Oxford for a term, and all the business of negotiation and so forth was managed by others. On the surface, he had taken a very leading part, under Lygon of Christ Church, who had quarrelled with the bookseller to whom rent was paid—had been supported by the committee—and with Pearson's aid had brought matters to a head. In other ways the activity of Pearson in the Union was a real thing both for himself and for others. The author of great books, later on, dealing with national and racial themes, he observed, as one who had knocked a good deal about the world, that English gentlemen were " the worst raw material of speakers anywhere." Therefore the good done by such an institution as the Union could hardly be overrated. And so he thought it worth while to give some details concerning this formative period of his own life.

Pearson had come to some extent under the influence of F. D. Maurice. Free Trade was his only contact with the Liberals. But he was somewhat captivated by Christian Socialism, and early in his second year he came forward at the Union with a motion in its favour. The news of this " amused the common rooms and frightened the Heads of Houses." He consulted a friend, Johnstone of Exeter, who advised him to stick to his guns. Johnstone was President of the Union in 1850. The result was a spirited debate, which placed Pearson in the forefront of the Liberal wing. This brought him more into contact with men of other colleges who cultivated the Union. Pearson brought forward, some time later, a motion :—" That the present state of England imperatively calls for a remedy against the concentration of large masses of capital in the hands of few individuals." Here, though he records it as his opinion that Toryism was not all-pervasive, Pearson does not appear to have been successful in showing himself as all-persuasive. And yet it was to men like himself that the Union as a whole looked for a lead. The practice he had gained in speaking stabilized his views. His critical faculty was great: and "the literary quality of his speeches," to quote the words of Mr. Albert Watson, "as high as that of any which I heard at the Union. Their style was flowing, ornate, but not overloaded with ornament, not often epigrammatic, but epigrammatic sentences came occasionally. He once advocated Socialism as the true system of commerce and he was invariably to the front in matters of education." Of Pearson, too, it is worth while to add that he was able to leave on the society's records one at least of the marks of a pioneer. The great change, which in the words of Prebendary Meyrick "made all the difference to the influence and membership of the Union," would probably have been even longer delayed without him.

Some memories of Frederick Lygon, to whom also the Union was under a great debt in securing a proper home, come from Mr. Plenderleath's pen. "At first Lygon had considerable difficulty in speaking. The Union audience had a system of its own in those days. It may be said without offence that Lygon was a remarkable instance of the great value of the Union debates as a school of oratory, for when he first began to speak his humming and hawing were portentous. So much so, that after a little while his rising was a signal for a tempest of groans and a scraping of feet upon the boarded floor. But he insisted on speaking on every occasion whether of debate or private business, and as his hesitation was not in the least the result of nervousness, he gradually overcame it, and became, by the time that he left Oxford, the very respectable business-like speaker who made his own impression both on the House of Commons and the House of Lords. I remember well one occasion in the Union when the disturbance at Lygon's rising was unusually prolonged. It was varied by the performance of the 'Rum polka' by men's heels on the floor (a then popular tune). The speaker waited for a moment's pause. Then, he quietly said :—' I intend to speak on this question, Sir, and as I am in no hurry it is a matter of perfect indifference to me how long I have to wait for the conclusion of the musical prelude with which hon. members have been so good as to welcome my remarks.' As Lygon was known to a be good man his unpopularity gradually died away." There was something more in it than that. Lygon had, of course, many personal advantages, to which, by assiduity, he added many more. And he cultivated the art of speaking with real zest. He became treasurer for the term preceding Pearson, and President in succession to H. J. S. Smith of Balliol, than whom, from many accounts, the University of Oxford never possessed a more all-round brilliant son. *Cetera desunt.* Even Mr. Watson, though he says, "I do not think he can ever have spoken otherwise than well," can give no chapter or verse as far as the Union was concerned. Publicity in Union matters was still a crime. But it is something to know that those of this time recognized when they had an exceptional man among them: Henry Smith as Fellow of Corpus, as Savilian Professor of Geometry, wielded hereafter and for years an exceptional influence in Oxford, especially in Congregation, that assembly which had so much to consider and so much to resist, but had the grace to recognize an Admirable Crichton when such a phenomenon appeared.

In addition to these men of mark and merit, there were not a few like Butler of University, Fowler of Corpus, Davey of University, Dicey of Balliol, who helped to keep things going. If the Eton tradition was waning, a Rugbeian tradition was now coming in. If there was now and then a lull in the excitements of debate, preparatory to the great struggle over Protection, and to the period of the Crimean War, "private business" still provided nice questions of procedure and conduct. Thus did Meyrick of Trinity succeed in transgressing—or perhaps in too conscientiously fulfilling his duties—as he phrased it. Anyhow he brought upon himself a formal impeachment. He served the office of secretary in 1848, before rising higher. Now it was the business of the secretary to record all the names of speakers at debates as Ayes or Noes: nothing more. "On one occasion," he writes, "I added words to this effect: 'At this moment—it was at the end of the last speech—a scene of great confusion arose, many honourable members rushing to the door to avoid giving their votes. Under these circumstances the numbers were—*For* (so many): *Against* (so many).' Clearly I was guilty of a technical illegality. Could it be justified or not? The Opposition (we always had a Ministerial and an Opposition party) demanded that the words should be expunged and that an apology should be made to the House. The Ministerialists declared that the words were needed to explain the numbers of the voters on each side. I, as secretary, refused to apologize. The Opposition gave notice of a vote of censure, to be passed on the next evening on which private business was discussed. Both parties canvassed the whole University, and, not content with that, the Opposition brought down from London, Stanton of Balliol, a young barrister (President, Hilary Term 1846), to lead the prosecution. The impeachment was made in form. The accused defended himself, and his friends and colleagues supported him. Need I say that he was acquitted triumphantly? The young judges on such occasions would always acquit the assailed party if he defended himself and appealed to them to support their officer." Prebendary Meyrick found, on at least one other occasion, that office in the Union meant a certain amount of trouble, of activity, of tact. During the term of his treasurership, from which he reached, eventually, the Chair, a number of books were missed from the shelves of the library. The man who robbed the society also lifted many volumes from the Oxford bookshops: he was discovered and prosecuted. He turned out to be, though a gentleman by birth, not a member of the

Union, nor even of the University. True to the profession he was about to follow, Meyrick visited him in prison more than once, and then took Pusey with him: both did their utmost to befriend: though it was but little they could do.

Thus the life connected with the Union of this period was by no means deficient in humanizing incidents. It was not always those who reached the higher pinnacles in the public world who best pleased the generous feeling of the Union, which indeed set up its own standards of appreciation. There was a night, for instance, when Grant-Duff used such violent language as to cause, in the words of Professor E. S. Beesly, a famous member of the Positivist clan, "such an uproar that the President had to leave the chair, a thing that I never knew to happen on any other occasion." And Grant-Duff never achieved office. A parallel may be found, perhaps, in another episode which brought the Wadham contingent forward. It is Mr. Bartlett who records it. "Harrison, Beesly, and Bridges used to madden the Conservatives by their unemotional Radicalism. Once, Walter Congreve having elicited howls of indignation by some advanced Radical sentiment, remarked very quietly as soon as order was restored: 'Honourable members seem as much excited as if I wished to upset the Monarchy and remove the Queen from the throne; but I have no such design; the time has not come for it *yet*.'" The recorder cannot, however, declare, anticipating Longfellow, that "at these audacious words Up sprang the angry guests and drew their swords." No: there were moments when audacity paralysed even its critics. On the whole, most of the ebullitions of extremists fizzled out of themselves. For many a year to come, the Union settled down to the consideration of public affairs under the tried method of two simple, practical parties in politics, each serving the State according to its lights. And defenders of either side were not now to be wanting either in quality or in numbers.

CHAPTER VIII

ENTER A SECOND PRIME MINISTER, LORD ROBERT CECIL—THIRD MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: A GREAT DEBATE ON PROTECTION AND FREE TRADE

PERVADING the Union, very often, were those humours of Oxford life which refreshed a situation productive of debates which sometimes lacked even the ordinary fire. Between 1842 and 1845, when it could not be said that the society was always adequately supported, it was a mercy to possess in such a man as Higgin, of St. Mary Hall, one who could be relied on to provide some entertainment. He would pour forth a series of fluent and flowery sentences on almost any subject, whether to the point or not, no one seemed to care. To draw Higgin became a standard amusement when the eloquence of others had dried up or the subject chosen grew abstruse. The hope of hearing Higgin caused men to sit anything out. The cry " Higgin ! Higgin ! ! " would arise : callers grinding the *gg* of the name low in their throats. Then rose, as if to slow music, the figure of an exquisite in evening dress with an eyeglass, a button-hole, all the finish of fashion, to pour out fancies and rhapsodies in amazing succession till all was drowned in inextinguishable laughter. The speaker himself, it may be mentioned, became a popular preacher, changing his name to Bellew. He retained his peculiarities even in the pulpit, and would begin a sermon with a phrase of this kind :—" When salvation was accomplished at the point of the Roman spear . . ." and as he followed the train of thought in the same style through a long discourse, any critical hearer might have hazarded a doubt concerning the value of an Oxford training in the arts. But the Union greatly enjoyed his performances.

The subtlety of others also caused good-natured laughter. Once a motion stood in these terms: "That Eclecticism is the only sound system of Philosophy." In these terms did common sense triumphantly carry its own amendment :— "That this house is unable to grasp the system of Eclecticism." Sometimes, again, the over-conscientious provided a diversion, as when a scholar of Wadham, speaking with some effect on a motion which nobody seemed eager to tackle, suddenly heard the booming sound of "Tom." He paused with a startled look, seized his cap and rushed out. The house divined, before he reached the door, that he had been gated and let him go with cheers.

All the memorialists of this period agree on one point. The galaxy of real talent was remarkable: the seeds of rejuvenescence were all this time being sown: where Oxford is concerned, this very thing is always repeating itself. Between 1845 and 1850 the cultivation of many subjects by many differing minds coincided with changes in the world at large. This tended to the setting aside of trivialities and subtleties for matters of larger range: only thus could the Union thrive. It was a very good thing for those who were, after all, soundly educating themselves, when, defying alike the academic calms and depths, political storms swept the country, for these disturbances had great realities behind them. This truth was realized in the Union by a number of men, afterwards distinguished, in addition to those whose names have already been mentioned. Some held office and some did not. All who felt drawn to politics contributed something to the issues which banished apathy and even restored enthusiasm. When Sir Robert Peel became the exponent of a new policy, latent forces answered a challenge revolting to Conservatism whilst it drew experimentalists of various sorts together. As showing the drift and spell of interest within the Union, a debate condemning the Peel Government obtained the distinction of three adjournments in April 1845, and the motion has an additional importance because it was brought forward by Hardinge Giffard of Merton, who became Lord Chancellor. Like John Henry Newman, John Ruskin, William Alexander, and many another famous man, the part played by Giffard (Lord Halsbury) was only tentative: enough, however, to identify him with a scheme never less than advantageous to any man who took part in it. Such an advantage is reciprocal, for though men grieve when shades of greatness pass away, the corollary is as surely true. These shades do not pass away wherever a corporate consciousness abides, and the Union will make much of these memories yet.

A very special date, an epoch-marking date, may now well find its record. It is February 14, 1850. There is no hiatus here. Sown seeds fructified as the due seasons came round. Many a name, still active, has already been recorded. Whilst Boyle and Meyrick remained observant, with other friends in attendance, the management of affairs as successive Presidents passed to Ralph of Queen's, Knatchbull-Hugessen of Magdalen, and Lomer of Oriel. But the real epoch-maker was Knatchbull-Hugessen, afterwards Lord Brabourne, of Kentish name and fame. If it had not been for his action in securing a complete report, now—when the issue between Protection and Free Trade crystallized opinion and the University was canvassed for declarations on the one side or the other—little would have been discernible of the parts played by the participants in this great discussion. That a debate should be reported at all went dead against precedent. For this one, permission had been given, grudgingly, of course, for when the thing appeared the Hebdomadal Board of the University solemnly forbade a repetition of it. Not only did the report itself substantiate the claim of the Union to be taken seriously: it has brought down to posterity the actual words of one speaker, Lord Robert Cecil, third

Marquess of Salisbury, who by passing the whole of his career in the service of his country, helped to make history as few of his generation had the power or capacity to do: whose early bias, therefore, expressed at this early stage, it is a matter of historic interest to trace.

The Lord Salisbury of ultimate strength and power bore even in youth signs of these capacities in feature, manner, words. Those who watched him and heard him noted, with detachment for the most part, his unwavering support of a traditional creed. If it was the question of the disabilities of Jews, he spoke and voted against setting them at liberty. He was against the greater freedom of the stage: he disbelieved in the theatre, thinking it injurious to public morals. He did not, as some speakers do, at first carry all before him. The testimony of those who heard him at Oxford is never couched in the language of adulation. "Lord Salisbury was always a good speaker," says Mr. Plenderleath, briefly adding: "He had no such difficulty to contend with as Lord Beauchamp" (the Frederick Lygon of this debate). . . . "Lord Robert Cecil showed a considerable power of speech—not at all of the 'gibes and flouts' character, but of deadly earnestness." observes Prebendary Meyrick. "I recollect a speech of his on Sir Robert Peel, which ended with the peroration that—'he lay in the grave of infamy which his political tergiversation dug for him. . . .'" Dean Boyle comments on Lord Robert's remarkable and rapid improvement as a speaker. Charles Neate of Oriel prophesied his eminence in the State. He took up the Union keenly. The evidence of the minutes, indeed, points to the thoroughness with which the future Prime Minister helped to conduct the affairs of the society, whilst every proposition which he supported reveals in him the staunch supporter of established morals, established religion; the declared enemy of innovations of every kind; a model of consistency. In the latter part of 1848 Lord Robert Cecil served as secretary; in the latter part of 1849 as treasurer of the Union; and he took each office seriously. Those who served with him were one and all conscious that they had a man of exceptional character in their midst. And it is partly because of his presence that the other speakers in the great "Protection Debate" shine with reflected lustre.

The speakers in the debate, which was opened by Lygon of Christ Church, appeared in the following order on the first night—after the mover came Shirley of Wadham, then Venables of Exeter, then Pearson of Oriel, then Lord Robert Cecil. Then came Walter Congreve followed by George Portal. After this, Lomer of Oriel spoke in the interests of Free Trade, and then the debate stood adjourned till February 21, when the discussion was resumed by Fitzgerald of University. Howard of Lincoln, Johnstone of Exeter, Knatchbull-Hugessen of Magdalen and Whately of Christ Church continued the debate, which, on the motion of Lord Ingestre of Merton, was again adjourned. After Ingestre had spoken on the 28th, speeches were made by Murray-Smith of Oriel, Strong of Christ Church, Plumptre of University, Austin of Exeter—the latter answering an irregular effort on the part of one Packer of St. Edmund Hall, who was not a member. Hare of Queen's concluded the debate, except for the mover's reply, and the result strongly favoured a return to Protection.

Of the twenty speakers, several had already given proof of their capacity. Lygon had gradually overcome the difficulty of speaking and even the unpopularity which had been his portion. Prominent now in the society's affairs, he was greatly concerned with the "forms of the house." Shirley, active and persistent in his efforts for the adequate recognition and housing of the Union, had already earned credit for the cogency of his reasoning. Venables possessed considerable satirical and vituperative powers: Pearson, as we know, was something of an idealist: Congreve's ability has also been in evidence. Portal had been the host at those breakfasts where the keenest spirits foregathered to discuss, amongst other things, and very much as taking part in the scenes therein depicted, the novels—" Coningsby " or " Sybil "—of Mr. Disraeli; whilst next to Lord Robert Cecil, Lomer of Oriel did most to impart a glamour—which has not yet faded—to the proceedings of this particular evening. Lomer, indeed, made a mark on the men of his time which sensibly adds to his stature. Fitzgerald was a man who, on the authority of one who later became Chancellor of the University, often debated very cleverly but too often " played the fool." Howard could take considerable pains in getting up a case, and on this occasion spoke very effectively, appealing with great success to the prejudices of the majority. Johnstone had taken part before this in the debates and was soon to fill the office of secretary. Knatchbull-Hugessen held a special position, being mainly responsible for the debate.

To Bedford of Brasenose is owing our distinct knowledge of the Union's politics at this time, with its feuds over the particular question of Free Trade. Bedford showed much energy over this. He practically forced the election of a fresh committee to give effect to his views against the Free Trade policy and to consolidate the influence of conservatism generally. This influence, for a time, had waned. Now, it began to revive, to dominate the society. Bedford's own keenness had grown out of his school experiences at Westminster. Remembering the privilege of attending the sittings of parliament and the functions and memories of the Abbey, he would have taken that grand old foundation, St. Peter's College, right forward on the road of political debate, had he only found an Arnold or a Vaughan " with quick sympathies and bold views " to encourage him. In this same spirit did he now help to stir the Union up. George Portal became his ally. The two were soon supported by a large group which created an independent Protectionist opposition against those of other views. Into this circle came Knatchbull-Hugessen.

The new-comer had good looks, good humour, good sense, the Eton influence and a natural talent. He went steadily forward in the estimation of the Union till he took the first place in it. He had been brought up to reverence the landed interest and might claim to know a good deal about rural affairs and the effect of agricultural legislation. Thus, although at this stage of development the future Lord Brabourne did not by any means see eye to eye with the leaders of Conservatism; although his true political complexion, according to Bedford, was that of "a pure Whig of the Orange type"; it is not surprising to find him holding a brief on the Protectionist side. In the year of this debate he even published a volume of verses containing trenchant summaries of the perfidy of Cobden, Russell, and Peel. As for his career in politics, the malicious might taunt him eventually for changes of view, but malice is always to be discounted by time and relativity of facts. The Knatchbull-Hugessen of 1850, stirring his own generation on one momentous question, asked and obtained a generous meed of approval and support, and the three evenings during which that business held the field contributed greatly to the reputation of the society as a whole. The summary which follows will give a fair idea of the manner in which the various speakers acquitted themselves. It has been rigorously compressed.

The report begins with the statement that the house was crowded.

The Honourable Frederick Lygon of Christ Church, in proposing his motion—"That the state of the nation imperatively requires a return to Protection": urged its importance whilst apologizing for venturing on a task of such magnitude. He would describe Protection itself as that system which was adapted for inducing the producers of wealth to recognize the principle of "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work." If labourers had less wages under the Free Trade system than before, they had less to spend. The lower price of bread would thus not better their condition. (Applause.) This loss of purchasing power must bring loss to home trade.

" The diminution," Mr. Lygon continued, " has caused distress, not yet at its highest point. Disturbances on the continent have brought many of our labourers home. Farmers unwilling to admit the worst, have refused to reduce their labourers to the starvation point. (Much applause.) Free-traders admit the distress but blame the landowners and farmers for not adopting improvements. But scientific cultivators, Free-traders, confess to losses. Zealous advocates of Free Trade are reducing wages. Relief for distress is needed for a greater number of cases, though the sum given is less. Then look at Ireland, and see starvation in every corner of the country. Sir Robert Peel's remedy—supplant the Irish from among English and Scotch ! What has made this extreme misery in Ireland but Free Trade itself ? Ireland is almost unanimous against it. Look next at the Navigation Laws, at Canada. Contrast that with the United States. Protection has given the very highest prosperity there. (Much cheering.) We have broken our contract, whereby Canada was to have a preference. The result, dissatisfaction and threats of severance. Still more serious is the possibility of our becoming dependent on foreign countries for food. The Legislature dreams of perpetual peace. Fine theories for men of cosmopolitan sympathies like Mr. Cobden, but Utopian ! America may withdraw her raw cotton and Manchester will stand still. What of our West Indian colonies ? Protection for them has been withdrawn. A violation of faith. Yet we still keep up the folly of a slave-squadron—(hear, hear, and cheers)—striving to suppress what we upheld, by offering a premium to those who barter in our fellow-men. (Hear, hear, and loud cheers.)

" Protection," the speaker continued, " worked well till 1846. Free Trade journals declare a return to it impossible. Why ? America has retraced her steps. This is an experiment. The recent elections show a reaction against it. We are alone. Other countries pursue on opposite policy. Turkey stands apart—are we to follow Turkey? (Laughter and cheers.) Shall we give confidence to Cobden or Peel? (Some discord.) The cotton-factors and mill-owners, with few exceptions, have opposed the Factory Acts. They are actuated by covetousness and selfishness, anxious to substitute an aristocracy of mammon for an aristocracy of birth. Sir Robert Peel has established over the poor a despotism worse than Asiatic. The only object of the Whigs is to make sinecure places for their friends. (Cries, laughter, cheers.) The landed interest is the chief interest in the country. England has not yet been made one vast workshop. (Cheers from the Protectionists.) No mere commercial country has ever succeeded. Agriculture is the best stay for a great empire. Let us be warned by what we see in neighbouring countries. Bear in mind the results of democratic ascendancy and record your votes accordingly.

"I would call upon you," the mover concluded, "by all your recollections of what England ever was—by all your hopes of what she will ever be—to record your votes in favour of my proposition." (Loud and protracted applause from the Protectionists.)

Mr. Shirley of Wadham began :—"Sir, if Free Trade had not already become the law of the land, and the question of Protection had not been, by the late vote of Parliament, for ever set at rest, I should not have troubled the house this evening, for I could only have echoed, for the thousandth time, those arguments which led to one of the greatest triumphs of modern constitutional legislation. But, Sir, the tables are now turned; and I, 'a crawling and servile Whig,' come to hurl back the Conservative taunts, and to say that if our policy serves our friends, no movement has borne more than this present Protectionist agitation the appearance of serving self. (Cheers from the Free Trade side.)

"It is not more than a year," Mr. Shirley proceeded, "since Free Trade came into full operation, and now Protectionists call for repeal. We must look wide and far: observing in the history of these thirty years the sure and, for a while, silent action of democracy, till it burst forth in one vast European conflagration. A great struggle is at hand between government and anarchy; with this prospect must we not pause before returning to a system which bears at least the semblance of a selfish class legislation? (Cheers.) To return to Protection now must be either an imperative necessity, or an act of positive insanity. We have distress, not confined to agriculture and not unprecedented. The fall of prices is due to many causes. Many elements depress the energies of our people, and a greater distress than under Protection does not exist. You have proved something, but must prove much more: your fair course is to wait till Free Trade has been fully tested by experience, and I for one see no grounds in the events of the past year for wavering in my opinion that Free Trade will ultimately succeed." (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Venables of Exeter, speaking third, advanced quickly to a consideration of Mr. Cobden's promises. Mr. Cobden had promised the consumer cheap bread; the farmer good prices for his corn; the landlords that their rents should be raised. Had these things been fulfilled? He went into the figures governing the importation of corn. How, in the face of these, could anyone say that corn would rise next year? The Protectionists had been called selfish. Was it not selfish to sacrifice the interests of three-fourths of the producing classes, as Free-traders had done for their own aggrandizement? (Loud cheers from the Protectionists.) By their system the rich had grown richer, the poor poorer. The middle class were trembling on the verge of ruin. The yeomanry had been knocked on the head and the small farmers were despairing. But the manufacturer might yet fall. It had been said that "England had become the workshop of the world and meant to remain so." Would other nations permit that? Would not America come and undersell the Manchester man in his own market? Voluntarily sacrificing the home market, thus he would lose the foreign market. (Cheers from the Protectionists.) Failure on the part of Free Trade had been put down to lack of capital, of farmers, to lack of skill. Denouncing the unfairness of the whole contention, the speaker rallied Dr. Buckland and other "theological chemists," who "did not know a plough from a pony-cart," and questioned the validity of the theory, ascribed to Mr. Huxtable in Dorset, that turnips might be grown on a mahogany table. (The suggestion that the expense involved might swallow the crop and the table together caused laughter and cheers, in the midst of which Mr. Venables gracefully concluded and resumed his seat.)

Mr. Pearson of Oriel then "addressed the meeting." On grounds of the consistency of Toryism he announced himself a Free-trader. He contended that the figures of prices and wages now threw the balance in favour of the new system. Answering the previous Protectionist speakers point by point, he argued that the disaffection of a few years ago might show Protection to be wrong; that the grievances of Canada and other parts of the Empire might have several causes. To him it seemed that the principles of Toryism meant "that everything should be done for the people, and nothing by them." The corn-laws were passed not by the people, but by the representatives of rotten boroughs. He traced some of the results of this policy from 1810 onwards. Should Protection last, with an increasing population the price of corn must constantly increase. It might be said that Free Trade seriously injured landlords. They deserved no pity if what they took unjustly were taken from them. Why did they not break up their farms? This, with the addition of long leases, would solve the problem. The French Revolution afforded a lesson which should be learnt. He appealed to the highest feelings: politics should be viewed with religious awe. Modern Toryism was mere pride of caste, of feudal absurdity, rousing an intense hatred. Free Trade might lessen the gulf between rich and poor. There was thunder in the horizon as well as dawn—the great social strife of Europe was reaching our shores. "It would be no small benefit if the labouring masses were urged against us by the absence of fancied rights, not by the sense of real wrongs: if they were led against us by mock patriots and pseudo-philosophers, and not by the God of the desolate and oppressed." (Loud cheers.)

The speech of Lord Robert Cecil of Christ Church followed next, and is given here in a form not greatly abbreviated, in order that a fair impression may be given of his most important contribution to the Union debates.

"Sir," said Lord Robert, "it is not my intention to offer these observations in extended reference to the speeches of hon. members who have preceded me, especially in view of the lateness of the hour. I need not go into statistics and arguments which have been frequently refuted. I am, no doubt, a Tory—though not after the sort of the hon. gentlemen who despises the Tories of this day and holds up as models of political wisdom and integrity only the lower classes of the people, and as a Tory I shall support this motion.

"It has been inferred that we ought to concede Free Trade as a measure of conciliation. With this doctrine I cannot agree. I cannot agree to destroy the institutions on which this country rests—to sap the only interests with which the glory of the country has in all ages been associated—in order to conciliate any class. We have been told that this great measure was but an experiment. Now if those who originated it had merely brought it forward to promote the general prosperity, without reference to specific benefits, it would have been accepted as such; though I cannot see why the agricultural class should be experimented on in this way. But the Free-traders promised specific results. Now, have the prices of food and the wages of labour varied in an inverse ratio? Statistics show that while the price of corn has been almost at its lowest, the lowness of wages has been unparalleled. The lowest rate under Protection was seven shillings a week. But under Free Trade? In some places they are now as low as six shillings; in others they have gone down from what they were. From such facts we can judge whether the promises of Free-traders have been fulfilled. (Cheers from the Protectionists.)

"We were promised that the effect of this measure would not be to take bullion out of the country. But embarrassment and ruin in all classes was caused by the Bank Restriction Acts in conjunction with Free Trade. We were promised remedies for other evils, particularly in relation to Ireland. I do not say we were led to expect a cessation in Ireland of the murders of landlords, of strife and bloodshed. But have any of these evils even been mitigated? Tralee Gaol, originally built for seventy persons, has lately held eight hundred. Three hundred thousand emigrants have left Ireland for other parts of the globe. We know also that by this measure our West Indian colonies have been ruined—the shipping interest depressed—complaints grow louder daily from every class. Agriculture must be reduced to pasturage. Why all this mischief? To advance the manufacturing class! Has the profit compensated the country for the ruin of agriculture? Exports in 1845 were sixty millions: in 1849 they dwindled to fifty-four millions. After inflicting widespread distress, all that we have gained is a loss of six millions of exports. (Hear, hear, and loud cheers.)

"Free-traders claim the advance, the progress of Liberal principles. One thing is certain, the lower classes have been sinking, the upper classes have been rising. That the distance gradually increases between the power of the people and their fitness to wield it must be evident. In great measure this must be traced to a certain apathy which is the bane of Conservatives in every age and country. Their policy is, always to stand on the defensive. They will struggle when power is attempted to be taken from them, but once gone, they never attempt to regain it. Thus it is that Radicalism is permitted to gain the ascendant; everything that can be wrested from the Conservative classes becomes the object of attack, and they who are deprived of the power and influence which properly belongs to them feel precluded by their principles from endeavouring to get it back. (Cheers from both sides.)

"The results are seen in the lowered condition of the country. We are not the same people that we have been, either in our social characteristics, in our patriotic sentiments, or in the tone of our moral and religious feelings. In short, we all know that the ascendancy of the democratic principle is co-extensive with the downfall of the country. This is the policy, and these are the principles, which we are told that we should not attempt to retrace. But surely, if these are the consequences of the course we are now pursuing, it becomes us to offer every opposition to this destructive policy, and strive to give it a practical refutation. And in seeking to accomplish this result, I would accept no petty compromise —no alteration of the system short of a complete restoration of what has been withdrawn—(loud cheers from the Protectionists)—not only because I would not yield an inch of principle to the clamours of demagogues, not only because I believe Protection to be an essential element of the constitution of the country, but because, while it is the undoubted right of the industrious classes that they should enjoy Protection, it is our imperative duty, practically to give the lie to this most destructive and baneful system." (Loud cheers.)

Mr. W. Congreve of Wadham followed Lord Robert Cecil. He proceeded quickly to a comparison between the rival systems and their apparent results, and showed that farmers could live despite the reduction in the prices of corn, questioning the justice of laws imposed by landlords' majorities, and the wisdom of legislative bodies which had to be protected by soldiers. He recollected the case of an officer, struck on the head by a brickbat, who went home and began to consider whether it was fair to tax the people's bread, and soon he entertained sounder views on the subject. To procure a thing cheaper from abroad was the principle he (Mr. Congreve) supported. He maintained that with some exceptions landlords had not reduced rents. (Cheers and dissent.) He quoted Lord Kinnaird and Sir James Graham in support of this. The distress complained of was of long standing. He quoted Hood's "Song of the Shirt." As to Ireland, the petition for Protection and for a dissolution had been a dismal failure. France had all our troubles: yet it had Protection! As a real Free-trader, he believed that hostile tariffs could be met. The fact that so many able statesmen had abandoned Protection was important. Sir Robert Peel might have made some mistakes, but the main principle adopted by him must be approved because Protection was morally unjust, and because the country generally was in a most prosperous and promising condition. (Much cheering from the Free-traders.)

"Free Trade," said Mr. George Portal of Christ Church, who spoke next, "was the result of a selfish agitation. We needed a government that would be not stunned by the whirring of spinning jennies. Manufacturers would never have existed but for the landed classes. Ten years back, every pulpit had echoed with appeals to the agriculturists to give assistance to these very classes. Taxation fell unfairly on agriculture, whilst the Bank of England, with its hoarded millions, was rated at fifty pounds. Let the house consider the inconsistency connected with the slave-trade, then look at the English labourer, and affirm the principle that our own population was happiest when their chosen creed was Rule Britannia, and their fondest anthem—God save the Queen." (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Lomer of Oriel declared that he would not follow the mover (Lygon) round the habitable globe. He preferred the statistics collected by the government to those collected from personal experiences and biased by private opinion. Could it be denied that the country was enjoying a degree of prosperity not previously experienced? Or that recovery from calamities had been effected with unexampled rapidity? As to the Navigation Laws: the ports had not been so overdone with business for many years.

Lord Robert Cecil interposed at this point:—" I wish only to state one fact if hon. members will allow me. It is that the building of all the ships in those ports was ordered before the Navigation Laws were repealed."

Mr. Lomer replied with chapter and verse from Liverpool. Moreover, he urged, we had achieved all the advantages reasonably to be anticipated from an unrestricted commerce: and agricultural distress was due to temporary causes. The increase of consumable articles imported had been large and must have greatly benefited the working classes. (Hear, hear.) The divination of hon. members opposite had astonished him. They pointed to the nation saying—See how prosperous you are, and therefore you are inevitably ruined. Perhaps that was unjust. Perhaps the prosperity was denied. Well, that showed some hardihood. But if they meant—Because you are ruined, you will be ruined, a prophecy had been uttered which it needed no sibyl to predict. He would not try to remember the mover's definition of Protection—it was an accidental definition, it could only have slipped out by accident—but give his own. Protection was a policy which would prevent importation, up to a certain point, by the imposition of duties on foreign goods. That was the real issue.

Continuing, the speaker tested the figures which had been given, showing that imports so far had not affected industry. Then, as to food. Had anyone died of surfeit? No, and still more must abundance and cheapness be fostered. Free Trade had in fact greatly tended to the elevation of the lower orders. Yet some, who would allow that Protection involved loss for the nation, would still desire to uphold the pre-eminence of the landed interest at all costs. Those he was addressing loathed, they dreaded, the commercial principle. He would not depreciate those sentiments which some men peculiarly adored. But the labouring classes would never again submit to the imposition of a tax which stinted their children of the necessities of life, for the sake of maintaining the influence of a class, or of a man, who, inasmuch as he was a man, must be various, and frail, and vain.

"Sir," concluded Lomer, "it is forgotten that through the exertions of the commercial classes the value of the land of England has multiplied a hundredfold, and that you are enabled to support an already too redundant population. It is forgotten that it was commerce which raised England from a third-rate power to the empire of the seas, and that it was a company of merchants who crossed the Indian Ocean to add to your dominions the empire which Alexander failed to subdue. These were not the deeds of selfish agitators or mercenary demagogues. You who are fond of proclaiming the indissoluble union of classes, obey your own precepts. Let me implore you not to continue a suicidal contest by seeking the restoration of an unjust privilege, but rather to join in the re-establishment of prosperity and concord—prosperity resulting from an unrestricted commerce—and concord founded on the sure basis of an equal and undiscriminating justice." (Mr. Lomer was loudly cheered.)

When the debate was resumed on February 21, it was Fitzgerald of University who held the field. He spoke eloquently for more than an hour on the Protectionist side, and was followed by Howard of Lincoln, who spoke as having recanted his support of Free Trade. Johnstone of Exeter followed in a speech of allusiveness, especially effective in those passages which recounted the adventures and misadventures of the old Protectionist coach. After Knatchbull-Hugessen and Whately had spoken, Lord Ingestre moved the adjournment, and when these had been reinforced on the third night, February 28, by four other speakers, whose names have been given, the mover of the debate replied, and the result announced :—For a return to Protection —102 : Against —31. Majority—71. The speeches which continued and concluded the debate were well worthy of the occasion : but exigencies of space prevent a summary of these. With one exception : for special treatment is due to Knatchbull-Hugessen, the inspirer and manager of the proceedings.

"This great social question," Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen contended, "could not be set at rest for ever by the political apostacy of 1846. (Cheers.) The general election of 1847 had been no true expression of opinion. There was now a reaction. Prophecies had been falsified ; he appealed to his own knowledge of the county of Kent. 'Farm high ! Spend more capital !' And the farming interest had been denuded of capital by those who gave this advice." The speaker, as he quoted Sir Robert Peel with mock solemnity, was greeted with highly appreciative laughter. "Where does the money go to ?" he demanded, continuing. "It goes to the foreigner ! The farmer, improving his land—from which Free Trade prevented any benefit—was like the man in the nursery song, deprived of his eyes, who came in contact with a bramble-bush—

"'So, when he found his eyes were out,
With all his might and main
He jumped into another bush
And scratched them in again !'
(Cheers and laughter.)

It was the foreigner for whom they had been legislating ! And the only way to compete with the foreigner was by a reduction of wages. Yes, we had to grind down our labourers to the standard of foreign labour: our farmers shrank from that: to try to get rid of this was a selfish policy!" (Cheers from the Protectionists.)

For the bulk of English landlords Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen now held a brief in defence. Many, he pointed out, had reduced rents. He dealt with the argument of the treasurer (Lomer) that trade had flourished by welcoming that prosperity except in so far as it might be attained at the expense of other, even more important interests. But such success could only be temporary if agriculturists were not relieved from their present sufferings. (Loud cheers.) He proceeded to deal with shipping and shipowners: claiming that facts were strong enough to bring the whole of the gigantic imposture down. Miseries might truly be due to other causes. But he would urge the importance of the home supply, and the Corn Law of 1842 he declared just, wise, moderate. Free Trade, in considering the home consumer alone, could bring no advantage except to a few manufacturers. This very advantage brought injury to another class with the consequence of injury to the whole community. (Loud cheers from the Protectionists.)

"From one end of the country to the other," declared the orator, after dealing specifically with every point raised, "Protection is becoming the glorious watchword of thousands of true Englishmen. To check the tide of revolutionary agitation—to prefer your own countrymen to foreigners—to ameliorate, to vindicate—is not this a high, a national cause?"

Appealing to the society to support the Church, the Crown: adjuring it by the might, the majesty of England, lest her glory should sink under an oppressive system: Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen closed his speech amidst reiterated cheers.

Whatever might have been gleaned of knowledge from this debate by those who attended it, the impression remained that the Union had successfully asserted its continuous and progressive character. There had been, as contributory to the discussion, many elements to prove the rare advantages which the society possessed. In Lygon, Cecil, Ingestre, Hugessen, were present individuals who could speak at first hand of the high matters involved. In Ingestre's speech, too elaborate for reproduction, there appeared an ingenious modesty coupled with conscious integrity, as he appealed "to the aristocracy of talent." He was able to give convincing evidence concerning the violence of political meetings: he had himself sustained a thrashing: he had his meed of cheers. The debate had been admirably sustained throughout. Honours, in the party sense, were divided. Criticism had not been lacking. One speaker had derided Hugessen for bombast. If it was suggested that some orators had been carefully coached—the reply came that this was all to the good. Of the varied knowledge displayed it is hardly possible to speak too highly. There was no speech which would not have done credit to a representative assembly. The three evenings had been conducted without help from outside, and it was perhaps a good thing that for many years to come the Union did not care to attract the external speaker, however eminent. Even when the whole strength of the society was under two hundred men an ample supply of speakers could be found if the subject appealed; no subject of importance was dismissed in a single evening; which things are a parable of some importance for successors of the present century.

There remains one tribute to be paid in connexion with this debate, and it is due to Lomer of Oriel. The normal successes of life reached most of these men. If there was any real satisfaction in public work, a Brabourne, a Beauchamp, a Pearson achieved enough to satisfy them: whilst a Cecil brought the highest honours to himself as well as to the State. No prognostications seemed more certain than those which assured to Lomer a great place for his talents, and it is pleasant to look back on what he might have become. To sympathetic watchers over the powers of youth nothing was more attractive than to listen to Lomer and to forecast the future in glowing colours. " We heard him with delight," they said. But here is one final impression given by Mr. Plenderleath of Wadham, who learned in later years that Lomer often spoke in the Union not so much from conviction, as from a desire to assist some cause needing a defender. " It was after Lomer had taken his degree and was keeping an extra term at Oxford. He put on the boards a motion—' That Debating Societies are injurious to Universities and prejudicial to their members.' On this subject he made a magnificent and closely-reasoned speech, and there were some very good speeches on the other side. And then Lomer got up to answer, and in a most touching speech recanted all that he had said, and in words that went, I think, to the hearts of his hearers, expressed his sense of the many obligations under which he was to that society, of which he then took leave."

Lomer died young. With the society remained the " Rugbeian succession " of which he was a part. In such hands, prospects for the immediate future were safe and even brilliant.

CHAPTER IX

PROGRESS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNION IN THE TIME OF GEORGE GOSCHEN, CHARLES BOWEN, JOHN MORLEY, FREDERIC HARRISON: WITH A GLANCE AT ITS LIMITATIONS AND ITS HUMOURS

RUGBY went ahead in the Union between 1850 and 1860 very much as if the prestige of a great school depended on it. Talents were certainly varied in a group which included Lomer, Henry Smith, Shirley, Pearson, Fitzgerald, Goschen, Bartlett, Bridges, and Charles Bowen. The list may be considered interesting if not beautiful. Had an Oscar Wilde lighted on it, he would probably have said: " Cut it out. What can be more ugly than a list ? " Even lists are a matter of proportion. Rightly regarded, these names have some value, though the noble nine were merely so many Presidents who, as such, simply "had their day and ceased to be." From a Rugby point of view, they might conceivably have been less important than an equal number of first-class cricketers, especially as they could not even make up an eleven amongst them. In their own line they were, as things turned out, representative enough. Collectively they made a mark in scholarship and in law, in politics and in literature. In this case all were called, and most were chosen.

These rapid successions were typical. Time had been when occupancy of the chair changed with every meeting, a happy vista of the past when a Wilberforce or a Wordsworth, a Stanhope or a Torrens, held the field. For a long time now the offices of librarian and treasurer were held for a spell of several terms. The presidency lasted for one term only.

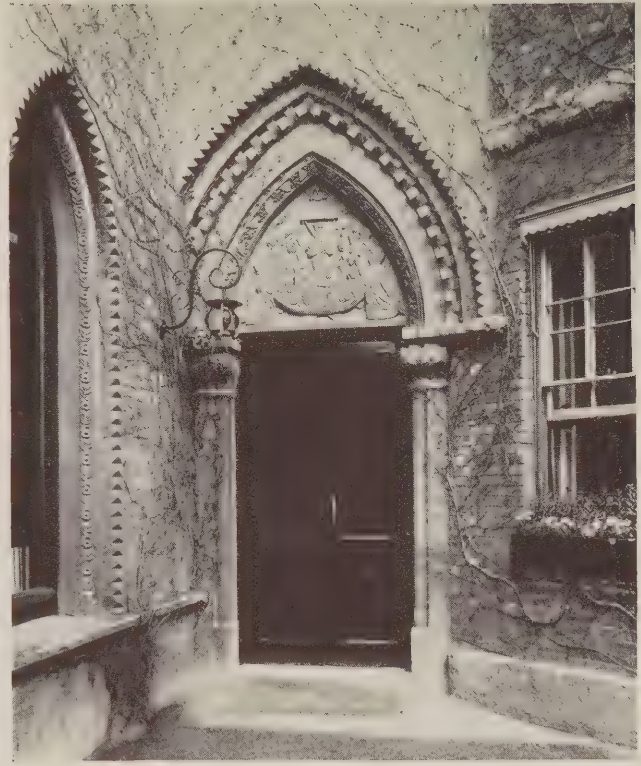
That was obviously the best arrangement, and one proportionately right in view of the fleeting generations. A man is generally nearing the end of his brief Oxford career before he can come within sight of the coveted post. Just at this particular time the coveting and the securing had become almost a point of intellectual honour with Rugby men. That, again, raised those inner and outer jealousies which helped to make matters lively, even when that merely meant the raising of eyebrows and the curling of tongues.

For there remained, just where tempers might rise or acerbities be kindled, the gradual emergence of colleges. Christ Church still held its own, but a careful examination of debates for the first forty years shows that many of the colleges never put in an appearance at the Union at all. It is rather remarkable that St. Ambrose's, the presumptive home of Oxford ideals in " Tom Brown at Oxford," is apologetically shown as having actually fallen from a state of grace, neglecting the Union to its own admitted detriment. This representation saved the Rugbeian author from the task of depicting a Union debate in his novel, a task most difficult to perform successfully. Among actual Rugbeians, indeed, enormously keen on shining at the Union, Balliol and Oriel still took the lead ; but it is worth noting that through these few men four other colleges—Exeter, Trinity, University, Wadham—gave adequate help. In this way the tradition, quite respectably established by the debates in which Lord Salisbury and others had taken a big part, was maintained for a long time as far as the speaking went. Then came a lull ; the brilliancy sometimes flagged. Brooke Lambert of Greenwich declared that by 1857 the debates were growing rather feeble, but he went farther than that. He contrasted them with those at King's College, London, whence he had come. King's had two flourishing debating societies. In contrast he found Oxford tame, even allowing for the performances of exceptional men. " The catch-words of party rather than brilliancy of thought and expression got most applause." Our critic consoled himself with the amusing friction of private business, which redeemed the whole and kept things going.

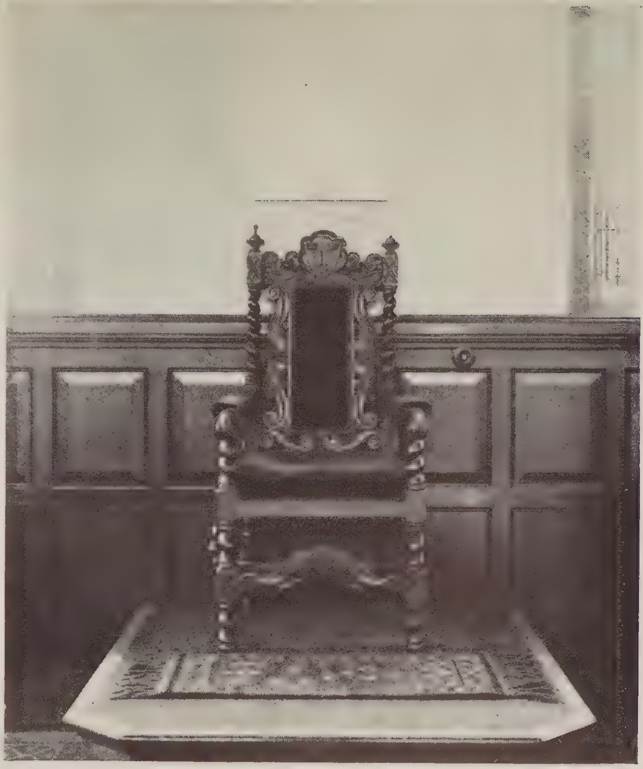
Nevertheless, the more serious side of affairs got a chance by reason of the presence of men like Goschen and Bowen. Bowen's name has come down to posterity as a great judge and as a marked personality full of learning, wit, and charm. He spoke at the Union "*dilucide et plane.*" It was thought of all these Rugby men that their tone of speaking, their peculiar preciseness, had been caught from that very successful headmaster of Rugby, Dr. Goulburn. Bowen, at any rate, seemed marked out for distinction from the first. His best efforts were concerned with education. Questions of education still had power to compel consecutive adjournments. But a bigger matter was the vexed question of political consistency. This raged for many a year over the personalities and the conduct of Gladstone and Disraeli. Almost as soon as he came up to Oriel, George Joachim Goschen aired his views on the subject.

Goschen, like many another young Oxford man, deeply inquisitive, did not by any means confine himself to the Union. He was admitted for the sake of his gifts to the society of those who met in select little assemblies for discussion, amongst whom were still Oxenham and Pearson, Fremantle (later Dean of Ripon), and Frederic Harrison, men who cultivated the higher erudition of the essay. At the same time he took considerable trouble to prepare speeches "for telling delivery" in the Union. There, said Dr. Franck Bright, Master of University, Goschen's fame was quickly established. His love of analysis had always seemed curious. He seemed fond of weighing every *pro* and *con*, and in the process to pull his own mind to pieces. Then he could range his reasons "in well-ordered regiments" on either side. The language used by some friends reached his own home and rejoiced a father's heart by their enthusiasm. The father was a sane and deeply calculating individual. "George," said he, "must be ambitious. He must become a great merchant—a little one is a poor beast." In later years we find the same father looking into the question of a peerage and the minimum required to support one. The gospel of the main chance meant much to such a mind. Even so, the tendency of George the son to look elsewhere than in material rewards for true delight persisted, at any rate as long as he was at Oxford. He fully enjoyed the lighter side of college life, and he exercised himself with conscious pride over his chosen subjects at the Union. Amongst these efforts he himself considered that the best dealt with Shelley, in whose defence he marshalled a series of thoroughly well-balanced arguments. It was said that he spoke splendidly. Men on all sides marked the young commoner of Oriel down as a positive genius. On other subjects he spoke with equal success. "Goschen made a brilliant speech the other night on the Papal Aggression," wrote Jex-Blake, "and on the right side too. He is far the most eloquent person I have heard anywhere."

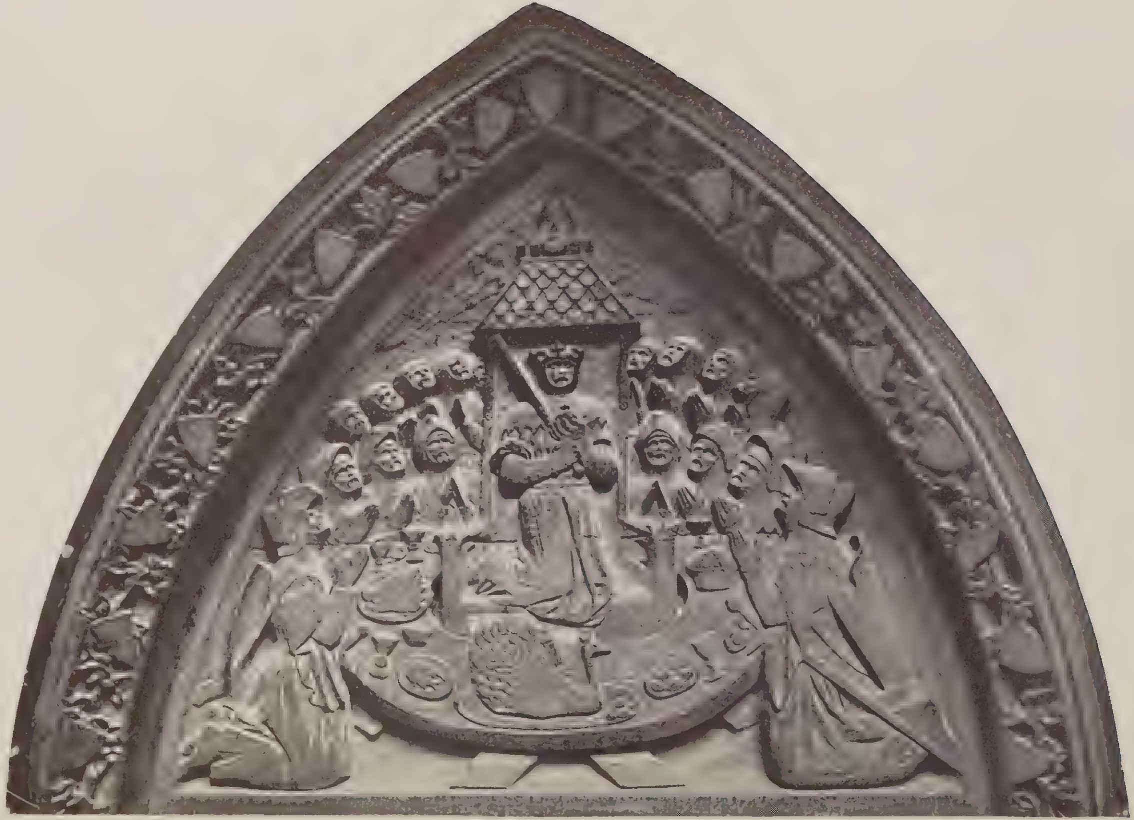
So Goschen went steadily forward. There were several other discussions in which he intervened effectively: on the claims of Tennyson as a poet, when Vance of Lincoln took the leading part; on the State endowment of Maynooth; on the admission of Jews into Parliament, which last proposition, considering his own origin, connexions, and racial leanings, he rather strangely resisted. In May, 1851, he opposed the motion "that the present state of England imperatively calls for a remedy against the concentration of large masses of capital in the hands of a few individuals." Later, he resisted the proposal "that the increasing power of great towns is opposed to the idea of the English constitution, and inconsistent with the national prosperity." In November, 1851, this motion stood in Goschen's name: "That the French Revolution of 1789 was justifiable, and has conferred the



THE OLD DOORWAY, UNION BUILDINGS.



THE PRESIDENT'S CHAIR.



KING ARTHUR AND THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE.

From the Sculptured Group by Arthur Monro, over the Old Doorway.

greatest benefits on mankind." As a minister of the Crown, long after, this speech was recalled by the mover with pleasure, the more so because a lifelong friend, Arthur Butler, of University, at one time headmaster of Haileybury, took part in it. Butler's amendment ran: "That it is premature to pronounce definitely concerning the good effects resulting from it, in consequence of the excesses in which the Revolution terminated." Both motion and amendment were lost. Viscount Goschen afterwards wrote: "I made on that occasion a somewhat fiery speech. I had concluded a rapid peroration. Butler rose with the words, 'When the express has gone down the line, then comes the slow parliamentary,' and turned the laugh against me on the spot."

Further, Lord Goschen went out of his way to praise others who had spoken in his time, especially men like Wetherell and Fitzgerald, who had sometimes "played the fool."

No doubt the style which Goschen formed whilst at Oxford was a weighty one, and an example of it has been preserved in a speech dealing with political principles. Not unworthy of study, as coming from a man who eventually proved his capacity in many great positions, are some of the thoughts here expressed.

"He who joins a party, as a party, commits an error which he will find it difficult to retrace.

"He who has fettered his actions by joining a party, not by conscientiously subscribing to a creed, has committed a crime against his country, and done himself an injury of which he must reap the fruits. If he pawns his judgment to buy up votes, his fortunes must rise high indeed before he will be able to redeem what he has pledged. Then perhaps it may not be called perfidy if he break the iniquitous covenant he made.

"He who subscribes not to the regulation of a party, but to political principles, joins others to work them out, attached to them by ties which last, only as long as the principles continue in his sight to be true.

" In spite of prejudices abundantly displayed in the course of this debate, consistency is not the highest form of virtue nor inconsistency one of the worst forms of crime. To lay too much stress on it is eminently dangerous. It is to hold out inducements to men to continue in error after they have discovered it, to lend a deaf ear to argument lest their convictions, which they are bound never to alter, receive a shock."

The opinions thus delivered, clear and characteristic, though rather cumbersome, are possibly the greater in importance because involved in the reasoning which actuated them were the actions of Mr. Gladstone. It would cover many pages to enumerate the occasions on which the alleged tergiversation of that statesman was considered in the Oxford Union. Sometimes other politicians were given a turn in the same connexion, but because Mr. Gladstone was particularly associated with Oxford he naturally obtained closer attention. The debate to which Goschen's declarations belong was on a motion dealing with Mr. Gladstone's political conduct, and occupied four excited evenings of February, 1853. After Lygon, Cazenove and several others had spoken, Benjamin Bickley Rogers, who had come up from Highgate to Wadham, raised fresh points in the form of an amendment. On several previous occasions Rogers had spoken well, especially on matters political, his gaze patriotically fixed on Church and Constitution. Twice he had carried his motions, one in favour of the Peace Association, another in favour of Primogeniture, without a division. His amendment now ran : " That we view with regret and disappointment the position assumed by Mr. Gladstone towards Lord Derby's Government and his subsequent coalition with the Whigs, as uncalled for by political exigencies, inconsistent with his past career, and tending to render permanent the disruption of the Conservative Party."

The fact that the debate lasted so long is sufficient evidence of something special in the air. This was the occasion, in fact, when for a stage nobody could be heard at all, and Grant-Duff forced the adjournment which on the last night brought Goschen into the debate. But the great performance belonged to Rogers. Beesly, who also took part, speaking against Gladstone from the Liberal point of view, "a paradoxical and perverse line to take in those days," vouched for the fact that Rogers created a sensation, and avowed that no such eloquence had been heard before in the Union. Rogers was followed with cheers into the street; more, he was carried back all the way to Wadham shoulder-high. Others had contributed striking speeches. Pearson, after Gladstone had been severely vituperated, launched a surprise. He drew a graphic picture of a public man who had violated every principle and thrown his early professions to the winds. At each pause the Conservative benches cheered vehemently, thinking that he was speaking on their side, till he suddenly turned round and exclaimed: "This, Sir, is the character of an inconsistent statesman, and this has been the career of Lord Derby." Yet because Rogers had riddled the Gladstonian armour with his thrusts he gained a majority, a bare majority, but substantial against a man whom Oxford felt most unready to dethrone, and a satisfactory vote because of the size of the division. For his amendment there voted 110, against it 104—a personal triumph for the orator and a tribute to his power, which Wadham greatly appreciated.

Rogers became President of the Union for the ensuing term. From now onwards until 1857 the succession of interesting debates was well maintained, and it was quite a common thing for a discussion to range over three or four evenings. The religious tendencies and prejudices of the age continued to arouse the keenest feeling. In one debate on the Jesuits, who were alleged to menace the safety of any kingdom, no fewer than thirty-five speeches were delivered. Not only did the consistency of Gladstone as politician continue to draw good houses; his fitness as a representative of the University was continually called in question. Some sound contributions to the proceedings were made by Lathbury of Brasenose, a man with a style, with a sense of literature, too, to be proved later in a long and most honourable career as editor of the *Guardian* and the *Pilot.* Charley of St. John's spoke occasionally; John Morley of Lincoln came on rather later, speaking frequently, not disdaining that immortal question of the wisdom of executing King Charles I; not refraining from broad social problems like those connected with divorce, then almost for the first time the subject of far-reaching legislation; not hesitating to expound, to defend, to extol Thomas Carlyle as writer and as constructive reformer. Amongst others who sprinkled the Union with bright ideas were Horace Davey, who made his name as Lord Davey in the law; a fair number of men like Mitchinson of Pembroke, Eliot of Trinity, Oakley of Brasenose, Wickham of New College, all wearers of ecclesiastical gaiters in their turn, showed something more than casual interest, though Wickham was fined pretty soundly on one occasion for not turning up to open a debate. Frederic Harrison of Wadham and James Cotter Morrison of Lincoln, both famous in their way as writers, came forward to support sundry proposals which lent themselves to special treatment from the Positivist standpoint, and these are names which give further distinction to the general roll; but, like some other eminent men, Harrison refused to consider, in old age, that either the Union or its debates had ever been matters of any great importance to anybody. He did not reach the presidency, but his own real service to the society had been, in fact, most valuable as a very conscientious librarian; whilst as for Morrison, his type of mind, like Lord Morley's, touching the Union at various points, redeemed it from futility whenever it happened to be exercised. Perhaps in respect to powers of persuasion during this whole decade, no man stood higher in the general esteem than Benjamin Bickley Rogers, and that esteem he conquered in many other circles. As the scholarly and witty adapter of Aristophanes he made a name. He might even have excelled, as a practical lawyer, on the judicial bench. This, at one time, he had been confidently expected to reach; but once more it has to be recorded that the fates were adverse. Afflicted with deafness, he had to retire too soon from the more active scene; but not to rust—he remained wise and capable and brilliant. For once, that overworked Oxford word may stand.

There is really no discrepancy in the opinions formed by those who singled out the brighter aspects—giving them, perhaps, a tinge of radiance drawn from their own idealism or a reminiscent glow obtained from admiration for others—and the opinions of those who saw the occasional weakness of the Union and dwelt on that. It is fortunate that those who were the most critical were also the most amusingly so; and if they were satirical, they were mild, even gracious and friendly in their satire. The Union was just about keeping afloat financially; its new building, begun in 1853, was gradually fitted up and completed; the average income of some £500 a term sufficed for the general outgoings, and for any undergraduate, indeed for many a senior man as well, the club afforded a centre of infinite importance to a scattered community in a place until then very poorly equipped with such amenities. The general attitude of Oxford dons towards the junior men was antagonistic to their freedom. At Brasenose, offences were actually met by impositions, just as at school. Men were kept *in statu pupillari* with a vengeance. A man was actually sent down from St. John's for not shaving. Another college called in the proctors to assist in securing obedience to the shaving rule, which died a natural death when the Crimean War sent a wave of Dundreary enthusiasm throughout the country. There were many other vexatious restrictions which affected not the wilder and more riotous, who could generally find a way out for themselves. Pettifogging legalities confronted the average quiet thinking man. College debating societies were few and far between. When the Union showed its strength and permanence by acquiring a home, the essential sociability of Oxford received a stimulus, and a fresh expansion of interests began. The first debating hall did not come into use until 1857; but before that date the premises used for writing and reading were a constant source of amusement and controversy as well as of trouble for those who were responsible for them. Early in 1857 it occurred to Oakley of Brasenose to embody the experiences of the time in a jest. He himself had done one or two amusing things in his time. A High Churchman, when that form of devotion to an ideal was more or less in a fluid stage, it seems that he had provided himself with a cassock for the purpose of acting as a server in church—a thing then practically unknown and unthought of—and this garment was adorned with thirty-nine buttons in honour of the Thirty-Nine Articles. In spite of this proof of ecclesiastical sincerity, it was during his tenure of the office of President that his absence became the cause of a question in private business at the Union. He had been sent down from Brasenose for cutting chapels. From this, like Wetherell of the same college, he recovered, though Wetherell's offence was different, and more notable because it gave Bartlett, his Union rival and contemporary, an opportunity for this epigram:

"Why was his term, at first so short,
Cut prematurely shorter?
The reason was, he floored the Port,
And then he floored the porter."

If occasional adventures over dining and wining were common enough in Oxford, it would be idle to suppose that Union lights, as such, were invariably immune from temptation. But this was an early incident.

Wetherell remained in the ranks. He never, like Oakley, reached the presidency. Perhaps his other offences had been ranker. He was a clever man who played the fool too often. But whether it was a case of too few chapels or too much wine, the proctorial or college penalties were much the same. And the victims, as a rule, came back again pretty well whitewashed. Wetherell made good. Oakley became an admirable Dean of Manchester. Of his soundness also his contemporaries had no doubt. Out of compliment to his hair they called him the "Red Saint." Not only was he the cause of good-natured laughter from others: he was himself fertile in fun. His jest took the form of a double examination paper, the first part History, the second part Law; and as it is almost a complete summary in itself of the humours of the time, it is worth while setting it forth here *in extenso.*

OXFORD UNION SOCIETY

EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE PRESIDENCY

E.T. 57.

Name ....

College ....

HISTORY

1. When were the claims of incompetence first recognised? Apply your answer to the present contest for the throne between Tallcomb and Howle.

2. What Brazenface and Balliol chieftains took part in the crusade against Sabbatarianism? What course was taken by Godfrey of All Souls? Which was preached (and how) by St. George (G. B.) of Merton? Give the names of the principal members (and non-members) who voted with the majority.

3. Describe the battle of "Coffee": the battle of "Composition" and the battle of the "Casino." In which engagement were "Dons" first used, and to what effect?

4. Draw a map of the Lower Writing Room, and discuss its adaptation for purposes of Coffee and Conversation.

5. Describe the province of Bennet, and give the date of his final subjugation.

6. Give the duration and order of succession of the late Rugbeian dynasty. N.B.—The candidate from Oriel will be expected to write an Ode on that lamentable clique, in the style of the "Oxford Critic."

7. Describe the Presidency of Mr. T-rn-r of Exeter, and state your opinion of that officer's character as an orator and administrator.

8. Mention any Postal Debate without an eulogy on Harris: or any speech of the late Treasurer's without a similar compliment to himself.

9. Contrast the state of the House before and after a Fog: and describe the appearance (omitting the necktie) of the "Aurangeman from Oireland."

10. Mention the principal Poets and Orators who now flourish. Give your opinion of Mr. Pickol of Balliol in the latter capacity, and of the Royal Blacksmith of Brazenface in the former.

11. Why are we subject to oratorical plagues, which were not in the land of Goshen?

12. Lives and characters (if any) of "Curius Dentatus," "British Lion," "Black Dwarf," amd "Union Jack." Give portraits.

LAW

1. Is a Base Fee equivalent to a Fine to the Librarian?

2. What is the Union "estate," and how did it affect the Diet of Spiers?

3. What is a "bare possibility"? (Ring any Bell in the Union and wait for an answer.)

4. What are the elements of oratorical "power"? Is any of them possessed by Mr. Ty-cke, Capt. Sm-th, or Mr. O-kl-y?

5. Can the Librarianship for a Term support the Presidency in contingent remainder?

6. Under whose Presidency were the following Statutes passed: " De Canibus non admittendis " : " De umbrellis non amovendis " : and the new " Novel Act " ?

7. Four gentlemen are spoken of as a Committee for revising the rules. Can this term be correctly applied to members who committed themselves ?

8. Explain " Conveyances of Married Women." Illustrate the doctrine by the Removal of Mrs. Buckingham.

9. Show how an illegal " Seisin to use " may be defeated. Quote the rule in C-rb-t's case.

10. What steps would you take to get back Stolen Books by Common Recovery ? How was this statute superseded in a recent instance ? (Candidates from Ch. Ch. need not answer this question.)

Even after many years answers to these ingenious questions float in the atmosphere of their origin, and almost any candidate for the presidency would probably achieve high honours if he tried to answer them now. Memories of men like Brodrick do not vanish in Oxford. Those who have more completely faded away were his contemporaries too ; bracketed in the second question with Godfrey Lushington, who adorned All Souls, Warden Brodrick appears again in the paper as " Curius Dentatus " ; and there is no harm in saying that this allusion to his personal appearance caused him the greatest offence. Had it only been possible for him to get destroyed the copies once freely circulated of this effusion, he would have paid any reasonable sum to have it done. Yet here he is distinguished also as St. George of Merton, vanquisher of dragons as well as of vipers, and he might well have been proud of so affectionate a tribute.

The crusade against Sabbatarianism gave satisfaction to many. Indignation waxed absurdly high at a time when many people thought it wrong to write a letter on Sunday. That was only one aspect of the matter, which caused ceaseless wrangling, and it may be taken as true that Balliol and Brasenose were specially forward on the side of reasonable freedom. All this is putting the horse before the cart, as Mr. Spooner of New College, who appeared later at the Union without committing a Spoonerism, once, in a lecture, very gravely observed. In a truly inverted sense, Fowle of Oriel came before Halcombe of B.N.C., for he was generally thought the better speaker and the more competent of the two, yet the Union put Halcombe into the presidency first. So much for the first and second questions.

The third question was really a very suitable and searching one to put into a History paper. Nothing is really so important in this material life as providing for the inner man, yet the history of the society so far had been lamentably deficient in this respect. As with the third, so with the fourth and fifth questions. They circle round the name of E. K. Bennet of University. " A very effective speaker on things in general, and a tremendously busy manager of the institution," so the late Mr. Irvine of Colchester described him ; " one who, when advised by his tutors to pay more attention to his books, thought he would be more likely to establish his fame if he devoted himself to the Union. He blossomed forth later in life as a D.C.L. Perhaps that was enough ; anyhow, he liked to remember how he had reformed the Union. And that was something of a fight."

It was a fight which involved another name and in a curious way. We have heard of Burgon before. All Oxford knew Burgon. He had a name for prodigious eccentricity ; as a man, he possessed infinite good-nature ; as a writer, he gave forth valuable human truths in spite of inaccuracies. As a Newdigate poet he had written the immortal words :—

" A red-rose city, half as old as Time."

Appropriately sandwiched with Bennet in the History paper, the " battle of Composition " is really a concentration on Burgon. To make the Union really useful every possible amenity of a good club had to be provided, especially with regard to writing. Oxford men will write. If they cannot write books, they write letters; more, they write notes. One of the finest things ever done by and for the Union was the provision for writing letters to any extent practically free of charge. The price of the Union was low; but when it was contrived that your subscription should include the writing of any number of letters, a wonderful commercial bargain was made, worthy of any " mercanteel " undertaking. The blessed word " composition " came into this. Out of so many hundred men, some would write a multitude of letters. Others would write none. The compounding system matured very gradually, but it was a sound scheme. The time came (long after Burgon and Bennet) when a man could get his whole subscription to the Union absolutely free by writing enough letters. Burgon had the germ of this idea within him. Some attributed the provision of letters, under the composition scheme, entirely to him; but this is a mistake. Bennet had a lot to do with it. Others also. But the queer fact is that Burgon was the man who had laid a trap for himself, and he had to suffer for it.

" I had the honour," Mr. Brooke Lambert informed the present writer, " of holding an office specially created for the suppression of Burgon." This, in fact, was the " battle of Composition." Burgon was by this time a don. He loved to prove that there could be no limit to the usefulness of the Union to the industrious scribe, the circularizing, agitating busybody with a finger in every pseudo-intellectual pie. Besides, it meant good business. Suppose your average man wrote two-shillings' worth a term? The fair limit might be three-and-six. But whatever you wrote the Union stamped, if not then, later on. Once upon a time you could get five pounds' worth of postage out of the system if you really tried. But Burgon added the delivery of notes, and this, in one form or another, even when the Post Office intervened with its privileges, went on until the war of 1914. Burgon with his own notes went too far. Hence the committee for his suppression. He fought, being a don, as question 3 sets out; and he was beaten. The Union "jibbed." When he sent out his missives at the rate of 120 at a time, it was altogether too much of a good thing on the part of a very good man. So the battle ended in his defeat.

The "Rugbeian dynasty" has already been dealt with. Turner of Exeter fully justified his existence, for he became an excellent judge in India. Harris was a servant. In fact, he was the one and only servant who counted for anything for many, many, many years. He began humbly; later, instead of answering bells, he "gave audience" to Presidents and others in his room. He received very small wages and did a great work. There were many who regarded him with esteem; some spoke of him with veneration before his thirty-five years of service were over, especially one who thought him handsome and distinguished with black hair and equally so when it had turned snow-white. It is obvious from the examination paper that his praises were often sounded when questions of administration came to the front.

The "fog" of the History examination paper represents Fogg of Jesus, one of those who had overcome the difficulties of belonging to a college which kept itself to itself. He had few enemies, he lived a blameless life, and very properly became a colonial archdeacon. The desperate "Aurange-man from Oireland" was (the late Sir William) Charley of St. John's, who anticipated another distinguished member of that college by flaunting a red tie. King-Smith of Brasenose was a really fine speaker but a very ugly man, curious-looking, with a weird habit of gulping as he spoke, which caused, said a listener, true to the Oxford habit of wrapping things up, ἄσβεστος γέλως. He achieved his own popularity, however; as did Nicholl of Balliol. The reference to Goschen explains itself. The nicknames of "British Lion," "Black Dwarf," and "Union Jack" refer to Lathbury, Bennet, and Oakley

The Law paper presents very few points that are obscure. " Spiers " possessed a room in which debates were held pending the completion of the new building. The " Conveyances of married women " had no Aristophanic meaning or appeal. Bennet wanted to enforce the wearing of a uniform on one Buckingham, a servant. Failing this enforcement he wanted to eject him and Mrs. Buckingham from the premises, which seemed unwise and unnecessary, and raised for the threatened man and wife many friends. The incident about the books involved a theft ; the culprit this time was an actual member, and he got into sore trouble. Christ Church and the University acted, and he was seen no more.

Fittingly enough, to refresh the Union, a poet was now called in. The hero is Bennet ; the writer, Germaine Lavie of Christ Church, an old Westminster. With Irvine the latter was " ringing the changes " one evening over proceedings at the Union, and the following morning Lavie produced his ode. Irvine had it printed by a man named King, a waiter at the " House " who was also a compositor and a reader withal, who used to read by the hour to men wrestling with " Smalls " or " Mods," a bottle of sherry at his side. The distribution of the verses as a broadsheet followed, and here are the words in full.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

HINTS FOR THE UNION

Though our Treasurer talk for ever,
  And leave no breathing space,
Though his speech be wondrous clever,
  His allusions full of grace ;
Still I think he more would please, if
  He stayed in his proper sphere,
'Mid envelopes adhesive,
  (Which somehow won't adhere !)

Midst sealing-wax and tapers
  And doors that always creak,
Morning and evening papers,
  The " Record " thrice a week ;
If he'd in thee watch o'er us,
  He surely would succeed ;
For then he would not bore us
  With wants we do not need.

As when some anxious mother,
  Whose darling child is ill,
In jam would fondly smother
  The powder or the pill :
Thus by alliteration
  Would Bennet gain our votes,
And force by conversation
  His coffee down our throats—

Coffee and Conversation
  O ! glorious bright idea !
Muffins and Meditation ! !
  Gossip and Ginger-beer ! ! !
Then raise a statue to him
  Who coin'd this wond'rous phrase,
Preserve him as we knew him,—
  A light for other days.

Half in earnest, half in mockery,
  His House of Commons look ;
In his hand a piece of crockery
  At his feet " that blessed book " ;
O'er the Union doorway sitting,—
  The Union's ceaseless boast,
With this inscription fitting—
  " BENNET AND BUTTERED TOAST."

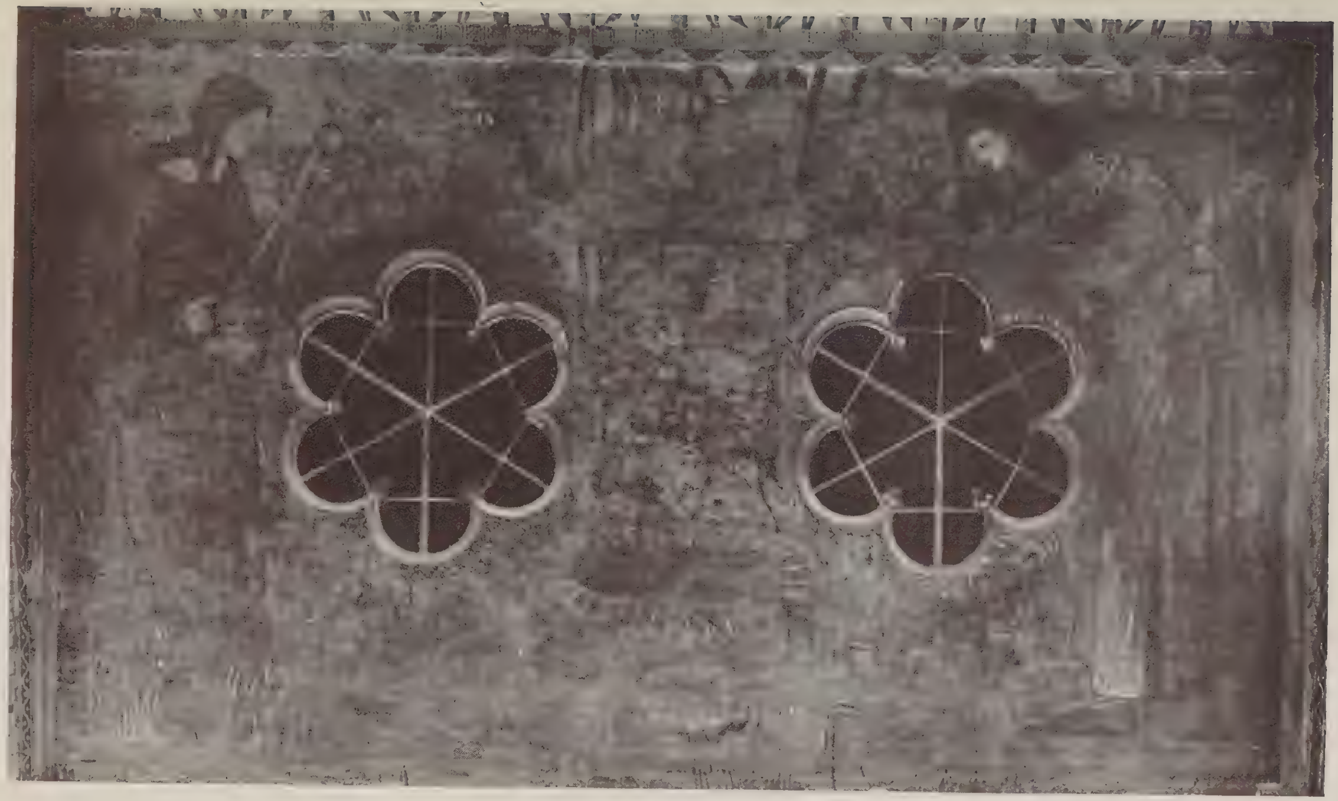
Bennet's efforts to improve the Union were really on sound lines. He was only a little before his time. The " blessed book " of the rhymes was the treasurer's suggestion book, and he himself had christened it so. He seems, at a distance, just one of those men who brought ideas into the general service and heeded very little the ridicule they might bring upon him. The Union had a home at last. Others of much higher gifts were coming forward to improve that home, even to beautify it. The Pre-Raphaelite movement had dawned amidst storms of contumely and criticism, but now, whatever its merits or demerits, it was to offer freely all that it could for the service of the Oxford Union.

CHAPTER X

ART AT THE UNION: DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, WILLIAM MORRIS, EDWARD BURNE-JONES AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITE MOVEMENT: A TRAGIC COMEDY STILL RIPENING FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE ARTHURIAN FRESCOES DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED.

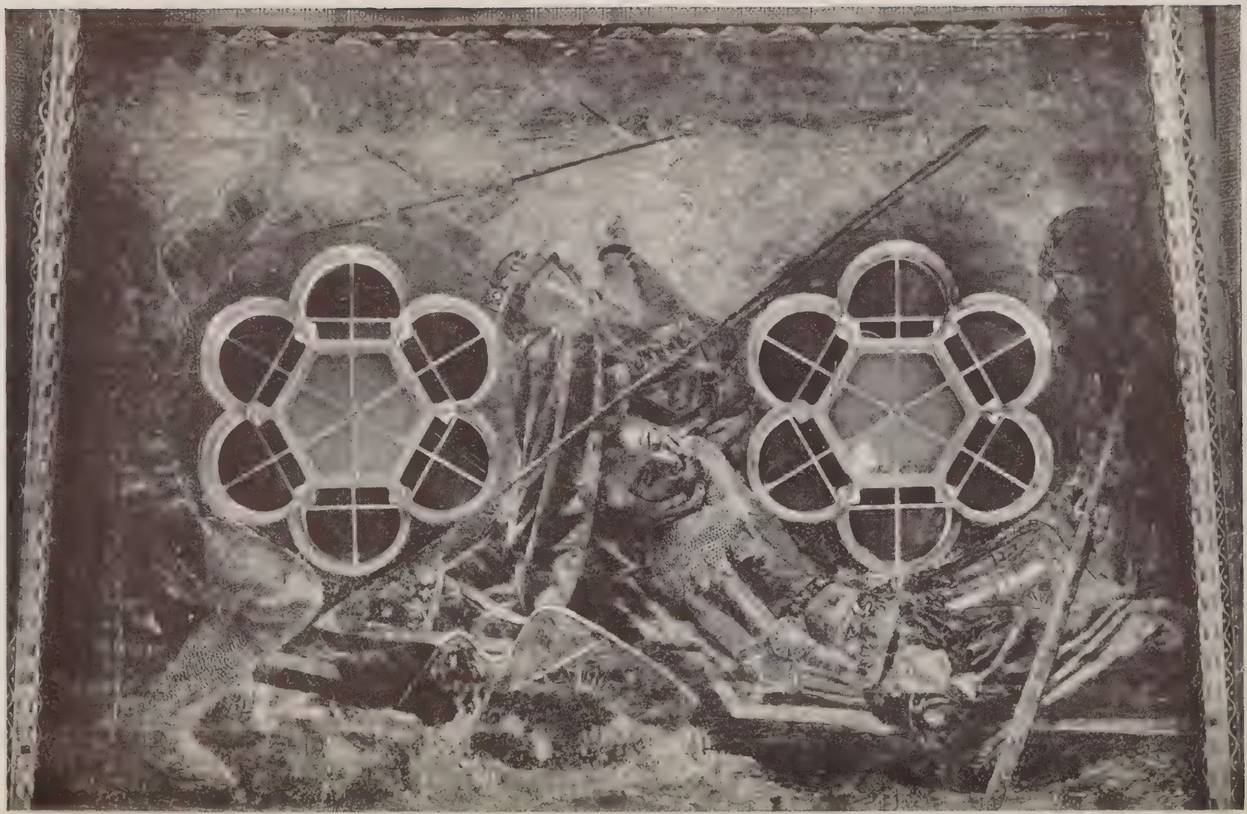
OF Benjamin Woodward, designer of the Union debating hall, which was first used in the month of February, 1857, much might be said. He was more than a man, because he was part of a movement. He fought a long battle between the Palladian and Gothic styles for the new University Museum, and won the day, so far as the official approval of his efforts went; moreover, he had to aid him forces, and again auxiliaries, whose aims were anything but materialistic. Free and unfriendly, on the other hand, rose Philistine elements with noises like the crackling of many thorns.

But now the teaching of Ruskin, once derided, had to some extent caught hold. Tennyson's pure fire seemed to be a flame producing warmth as well as light, and many were trying to follow the gleam. Others professed a mediævalism not less true, not less beautiful. Nothing held without question, and this was the Union's chance. One fault attributed to the courtly poet, for instance, was a debasing sententiousness, reflected in the popular admiration. But after discussion Tennyson could be cleared and, to that extent, exalted. Higher than this into the artistic atmosphere Oxford now began to soar, with an uplifting energy which was the joy of many souls.



THE DEATH OF MERLIN.

From a Photograph of the Wall-painting by Edward Burne-Jones in the present Library of the Oxford Union.



THE DEATH OF ARTHUR.

From a Photograph of the Wall-painting by Arthur Hughes in the present Library of the Oxford Union.

Woodward made his buildings in the spirit of a man who knew very well what he was doing. His personality comes down to us full of attractiveness. In talkative Oxford he stood alive as any man, but very reticent. The sadness of premature shadow is inseparable from any picture of him. But he was one of those who in the short time fulfilled the long time. He never worked alone. Round him were his enthusiastic Irish pupils. From his mind came multitudinous ideas quickly imparted, and so the Museum appeared out of contentious clouds. "That lovely building," it was said, "rose like an exhalation; its every detail, down to panels and footboards, gas-burners and door-handles, an object-lesson in art, stamped with Woodward's picturesque inventiveness and refinement." By another observer, a great lover of Oxford, the Museum was denounced as pretentious, a monstrosity, a combination of all the incongruities; with its Italian Gothic windows, high-pitched French roofs and variegated Russian tiles, all the worse, not the better, for Ruskinian interference. But of the Museum's general fitness, as of its suitability for the objects to be housed; of its spaciousness, airiness, and general dignity, nobody had any doubts. Nor could anyone deny that the spirit now devoted to the service of science in Oxford deserved admiration, though science was suspect, and some shuddered at the sight of a microscope. But beauty had crept in, always in intention, occasionally in fact. This seemed of good augury when Woodward was commissioned to make a very special effort for the Oxford Union.

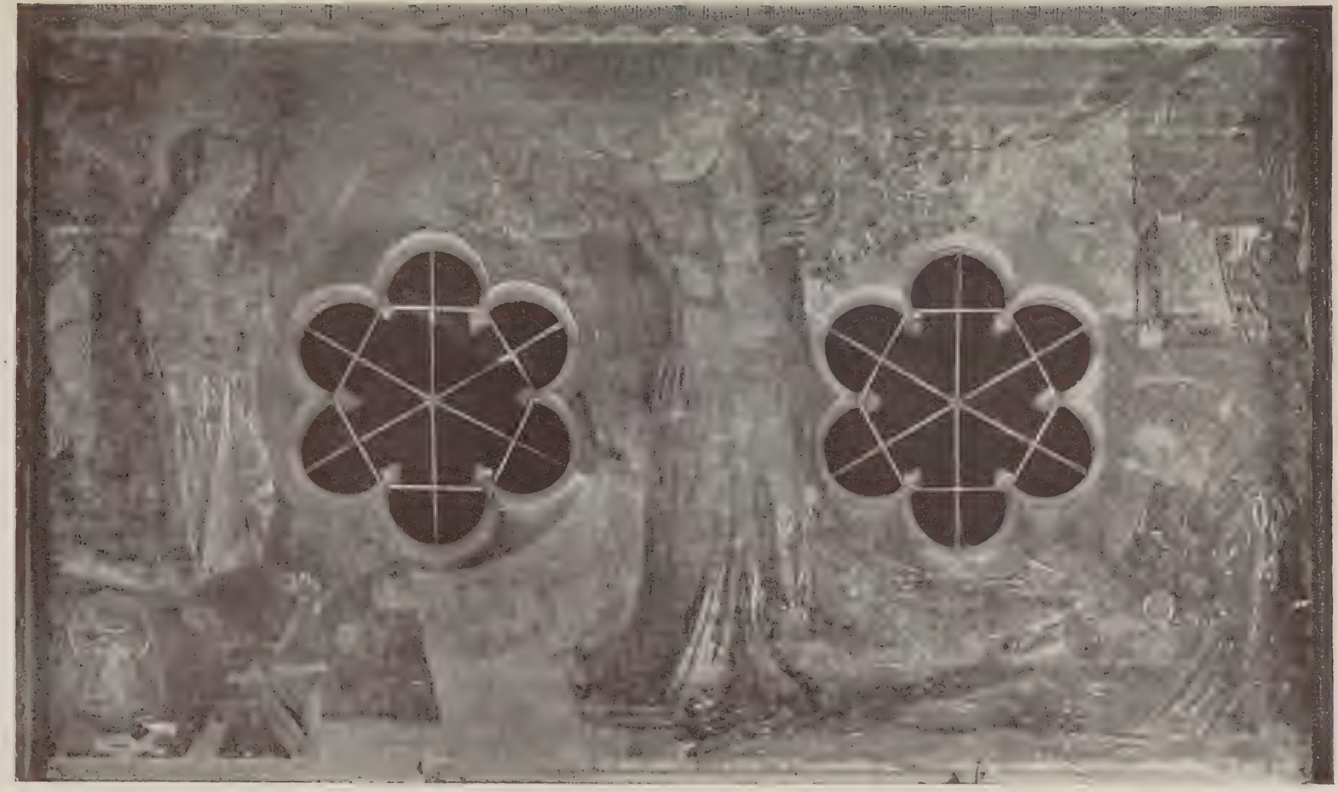
The building accepted as appropriate by those responsible took the form of a long and handsomely elevated building with apsidal ends. A narrow gallery ran completely round it, and a small apartment for reading was entered from the gallery. The whole group of buildings, which included rooms for general use, approximated to the Gothic type, but their chief merit lay in perfect adaptation to the purposes for which they were designed. Though increasing needs proved their adaptability for other purposes, it is doubtful if any hall used for debate ever possessed better acoustic properties than the hall which Woodward built. Those who have grown accustomed to the spacious debating-hall which has succeeded it may be well content to profit by a change which has manifold advantages. But the old voices rang out well in the old place ; many years later, revisiting the Union, men who had spoken there would note a difference and touch a regret, as for something lost. But the silence of the old hall to-day is an ample compensation, for it is the silence of many books, which are themselves eloquent ; besides, these walls have echoes of their own. Amongst the first questions here debated was the existence of ghosts.

Into this hall, soon after it was built, came Algernon Swinburne of Balliol, identified, so to speak, not only with his later self as a great poet, but with all that copious thought and feeling which removed many a reproach from Oxford and added leaves to garlands which time, treasuring, has refused to scatter. Swinburne naturally became one of the band keenly interested in the embellishments of the Union, but he also gave his mind to debate. He showed his Liberalism by speaking up for the extension of the franchise, and he offered reasons against the extremists in questions of criminal procedure and punishment. These were the days when John Bright and his pacific pronouncements, or his Radicalism generally, were very ardently canvassed and opposed. The Conservative side was well represented. For a space of several years no name was more prominent than that of Lyulph Stanley. Peel or Palmerston, Russell or Gladstone, the Italians of 1860 or the French of 1793—all were grist for the mill of the Honourable E. L. Stanley of Balliol. He fenced with John Morley and A. V. Dicey and T. H. Green, each one of whom added distinction to successive debates.

Thomas Hill Green took the presidency in his stride. He served no other office. The devotion of many was his portion in the world, for he inspired men with his own enthusiasm and his philosophy was applied to many an important everyday question ; to those very problems in which the Union took not a passing but an abiding interest on the ground that Oxford implied preparation for a useful career. Green's greater achievements included a wide influence over the minds of others. Serious students like Henry Nettleship acknowledged the obligation. Novelists like Mrs. Humphry Ward were proud of their indebtedness. The powers of such a man were shown early in the germ. Political fervour had yielded something by this time to interests sociological, ethical, artistic. Art had its humours. Thus a Green might interpret, in the end, all that a Woodward might hope to embody in his rough-cast plan.

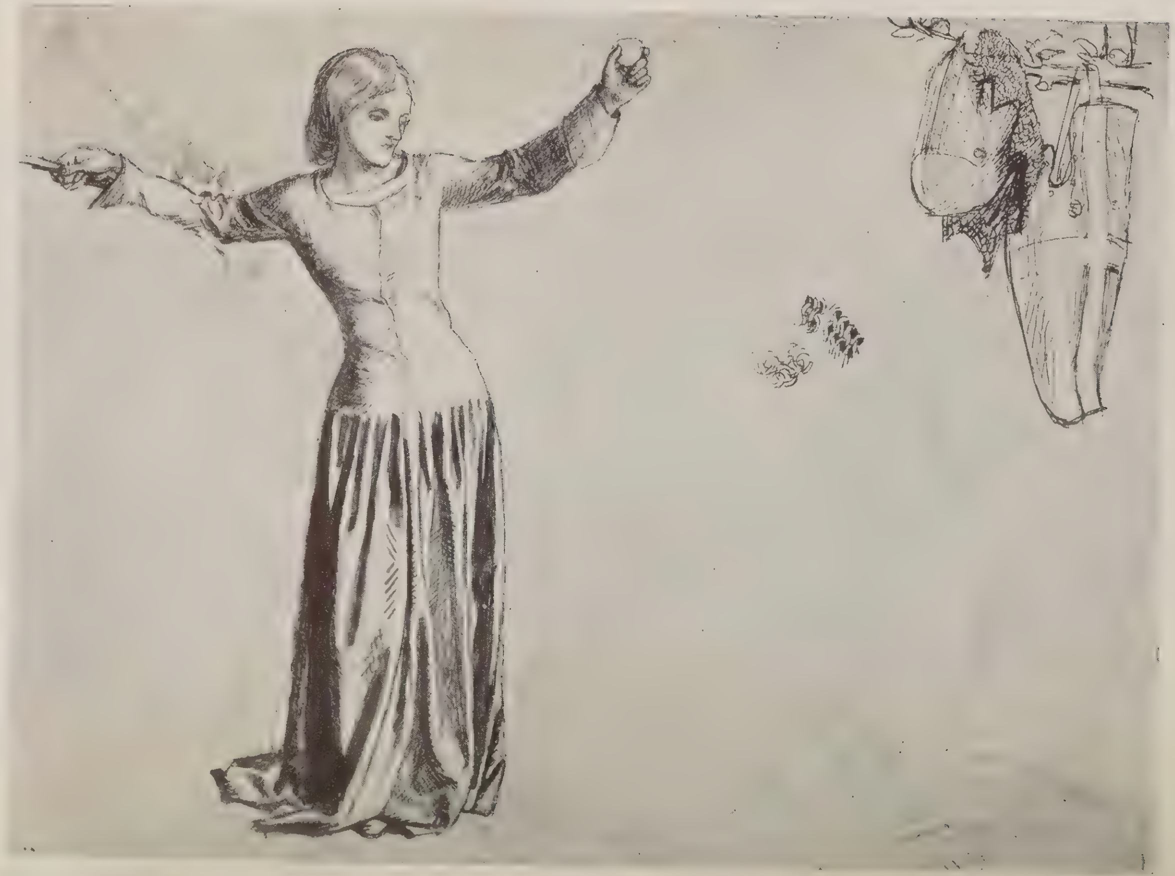
There never dawned on the Oxford consciousness a theme or scheme more vital in principle than came into being as soon as the walls of Woodward's building looked ready to receive an idea. The hall had been roofed in. The narrow gallery was already fitted with bookshelves. Above these was a broad belt of wall divided into ten bays pierced by twenty six-foil circular windows. This broad belt of wall attracted the glance of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, an Oxford guest, who saw herein an opportunity for artistic development and something more. For him, the walls were hungry for pictures. And he was hungry to fill them. He went round to his friends. His thoughts, with theirs, expanded. His own position in relation to Oxford was not that of a member of the University, but, through this idea and its fruition, he belonged henceforward to the University's soul. Actual members of the Union understood him at once. Some amongst them, like William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, both of Exeter, were already feeling their way as artists to the approval of this most ingenious man, whose reputation as writer and painter was growing, ascending from the regional into the universal, though all might not admit it ; for art and letters are judged rather severely where the regional theory reigns and settles everything down in compartments so that nothing may be admired which has not been admired before.

This happened to be a time when people at large were eagerly accepting Tennyson as poet and thinker, though reactions were setting in amongst the superior. In the main, Browning was generally considered, to quote the phrase of a distinguished prelate, " too new-fangled for words." These were comparisons, however, especially in Oxford, too remote for the majority, bounded for the most part by theories either academic or popular. For many a man the highest ranges of thought, outside the schools—which, except for the picked minority, were an affair of elementary textbooks—reached not much farther than the cartoons of *Punch* in politics or the verses of John Keble in literature. This is no disparagement of the admirable journal which counted Thackeray amongst its contributors, nor yet of the divine, kind of heart and lofty of soul, whose service to Oxford a living memorial still very happily enshrines. But although we may envy those who lived in this prolific time, all were not conscious of their opportunities, and the Rossetti group represented a cause not wholly lost, but as certainly not wholly gained. If the artists wanted encouragement, they had it in the general acceptance of Tennysonian readings of chivalry: in that very spirit they came offering gifts, and their gifts were hardly even regarded with suspicion, though they were prophets in their own country, because the Arthurian legends had already gained a most sympathetic hearing. As a company, all were bound together, as Holman Hunt pointed out, " mainly by literary enthusiasm." In the Oxford Union, in the very building, they saw a consecration " not only to the utterances of young intellectual athletes, but also to the proclaiming of



SIR LANCELOT'S VISION OF THE SAN GRAIL.

From a Photograph of the Wall-painting by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in the present Library of the Oxford Union.



STUDY FOR THE FIGURE OF GUINEVERE STANDING BY THE APPLE TREE.

From the Study by Dante Gabriel Rossetti for the Wall-painting in the Oxford Union.
Reproduced by permission of the Art Committee, Birmingham.

individual ideals." Time may have dimmed, by the force of misfortune or accident, their inestimable achievement, but nothing can spoil their perception of what the University and the Union should really stand for, and next to the rightness of their vision comes the virtue of their efforts to make it real.

It is part of the story that the Arthurian cycle lived, all along, instinct with religious zeal ; and this is of some importance because Pre-Raphaelite apologists have been at some pains to declare that there was nothing pietistic about their movement : as though Rossetti and William Morris, outstanding representatives, stood for a kind of secular mediævalism which is almost a contradiction in terms. It must, indeed, be remembered that the Christian element in the story of the Round Table pervades the whole, and that Christian ethics are the halo round the nearly sacred figures of the chief protagonist and his knights. At the same time, Oxford has never been less than friend to any truly religious view. The artists themselves, free, as many poets are, from distinctive religious bias, were by no means free from religious motive. Apostles of beauty, they promoted something more than a secular cause. They promoted also, sensibly or insensibly, discussion and criticism. It was not with the covering of walls or the mixing of paints that they were mainly concerned, and yet the smallest detail of shape or proportion or colour affected their very lives. Such earnestness appealed. Members of the Union were interested and taken out of themselves. Divisions of opinion might have inspired a Shakespearean pen. . . . Some could see beauty for themselves ; some could not see it even when it was thrust upon them. . . . In 1855 John Oakley had spoken in favour of the new movement. Then Frederic Harrison had carried this amendment : " That though the Pre-Raphaelite school gives hope of a revival of Art, it does seem to be affected with some deplorable delusions."

However, the school, now on its trial, had many disciples. All had zeal, many had knowledge. The school learned to dispute. It learned also to dictate, as being in some measure sure of itself ; as ready to secure conversion to a reasonable, an ennobling creed. Its moral inspiration was sound. The instincts of its members were communistic in the ideal sense, for they believed that in working for the community they could draw the community upwards. They had something to give. This could be understood. The paintings were begun to a chorus of encouragement. Characteristically enough, no very careful consideration had been given to ways and means.

Under mutual criticism, a most important factor, rare and valuable capacities in the several painters were quickly revealed. So far from offering mere tributes to external beauty, by exhibiting refinements or elaborations of the picturesque, the governing thought remained of devotion to high ideals, higher even than any theory of painting, so that the orators below, if they lifted their eyes, would perpetually be reminded that their own aim must be truth, and truth in beauty : a thing which adhesion to political or other parties occasionally tended to obscure.

Happily for all concerned, there ensued a thoroughly enjoyable interlude of fun and life within the Union whilst the pictures on the walls were taking shape. Hesitations and miscalculations were the order of the day, but these added to the merriment of the enterprise. Enthusiasm was the determining factor in every difficulty, and Gabriel Rossetti obtained many an accession of help by the sheer power of his personality. Some of the painters who eventually fell in with the scheme were very diffident at first, but soon the leaders—Rossetti, Morris, Burne-Jones—were reinforced by Pollen, Prinsep, Hughes, and Monro.

The condition of affairs thus suggested encouragement, the building being well advanced and the creamy surface of the walls within most tempting to the decorative artist's brush. In embellishing Woodward's Museum, much had already been done by ardent young sculptors and others on the Ruskinian principle of giving artistic labour as nearly as possible for nothing. The artists were satisfied with compensation for expenditure on material and for occasional assistance. The Union, by an informal arrangement—for time seems hardly to have been the essence of the contract—agreed to lodge and feed the workers, who were the last people in the world to bother much about incidental details of cost. Originally it had been estimated that a single Long Vacation would see the business through. The work was actually begun in mid-August, 1857, but it lasted till the spring of the following year. Practical difficulties naturally arose, but compensation came, especially when artistic sentiment received the backing of personality. There were busy evenings devoted to friendly discussion, criticism, and chaff ; to the poetry of the business not less than to its execution ; if doubts and drawbacks, not unmixed with financial bewilderment, were ventilated in the debating-hall, a Lushington or a Bennet came to the front as defenders, and the painters were proud to record how Charles Bowen, as treasurer or President, proved a tower of strength. " Bowen was beloved by all," said Edward Burne-Jones. " A courteous and delightful fellow, and always regarded in the University as a man of exceptional promise—whom Rossetti loved at once." To Bowen, indeed, as to others, a discerning few, the spontaneous generosity and idealism of so many different minds very naturally appealed ; in response, other minds were gladly bent to the task of making the road smooth and the burden light.

In truth, no hearts could have been lighter. " What fun we had at the Union ! What jokes ! What roars of laughter ! " So wrote Val Prinsep. He had himself arrived in Oxford to the tune of a jest in after-years traditional, for the cabman, ordered to drive to the Union, had deposited his fare at the workhouse. Prinsep, however, succeeded in dining with Rossetti the same evening and plunged into a life which sent him back to the Mitre to sleep, his brain in a whirl. His introduction to Burne-Jones and Morris on that occasion stirred him to a new belief in the dual mission of literature and art. Morris read his own poems aloud. The others listened, but not silently. This became the prelude to many such evenings, and to daytimes spent over work which constantly grew in scope. At Rossetti's invitation, the band had been reinforced by John Hungerford Pollen of Merton and Rodham Spencer Stanhope of Christ Church, graduates who already had artistic designs to their credit ; the influence of George Frederick Watts was with them and over them too.

Never in the long history of Oxford had such groupings and individualities forgathered to concentrate devotion on a common task. The life of current thought ran apace because in these men it was ahead of its time. As social entities they shone and sparkled, defying the conventions. They were not spoiled by the drab costume of the age in which they lived ; their lineaments have come down to us in another guise. The grand portrait of Morris by Watts is an example. A colour-scheme, for them, had grown to be the prime necessity, and they proceeded to live up to it. As mere human beings, with youth all round them, they encouraged liveliness. They exhibited artistic athleticism no less than dramatic capacity. It became even part of the fun to dress the characters, enact the scenes, pose as the heroes they were to paint. Here is a picture of Prinsep from the pen of Lady Burne-Jones : " Six foot one, fifteen stone, well-built, hair like finest wire, short, fluffy, curly and seamless—age only nineteen. His strength wonderful ; Edward liked to remember being picked up by him and carried under one arm up a ladder to the gallery where they painted." Swinburne came in frequently to watch and judge : he loved his friends and worshipped their art : not from afar

In the main sphere of action, nothing was done by halves. Perhaps in this lay the remediable fault of rashness. Certain allowances must be made for inexperience, for the employment of means in themselves unreliable, and for the fact that the arts of mural painting had suffered an eclipse. The methods employed were all that were available. Practically every channel of possible assistance was successfully explored. Rossetti's own connexion with the University had arisen from his mastership of drawing at the Working Men's College, the evening school of which had enlisted the help of Oxford graduates. Holman Hunt's theory—"*the expression of imaginative thought, for the cultivation of which the University was originally founded, and the means for which, from the earliest times, it collected, preserving and perfecting these as civilization and opportunity advanced*"—now received help of many kinds. Swan, a friend of Rossetti's, fertile of suggestion, eccentric in genius, lent his willing aid. Faulkner of University, a tutor of mathematics, joined the working alliance. St. John Tyrwhitt of Christ Church came into the band. Such names as these were inscribed as artificers on the roof, adorned with floral leafage of great decorative beauty, which William Morris designed in a day.

Morris, generally known as "Top"—a nickname taken from Topsy in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" for the sake of his curly pate—may be deemed to have been the life and soul of the party, just as he proved himself the universal handyman. Time was passed in jests, not forgetting the quips of caricature, which often took the form of warlocks or wombats or other weird devices, on windows whitewashed to receive them. Some of these caricatures escaped in more permanent form to the rafters. In all emergencies, Morris could be relied on for constructive devices. He had the artistic temperament in full and could rage if things went wrong. Once they were right, he looked and felt splendid in a well-fitting coat of mail, with a basinet or helmet devised by himself and made by a practical smith with a forge near Oxford Castle.

"What made this effort ever memorable," says Mr. Holman Hunt in his illustrated monograph, "was its centralizing power which brought together men destined afterwards to be inspirers of their generation, leading them to fraternize in unrestrained candour and stimulating interchange of thought while still at the entrance of life."

The twelve designs, were these :—

1. Sir Lancelot's Vision of the Sangrael. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti.*
2. Sir Pelleas and the Lady Etarde. *Valentine Prinsep.*
3. King Arthur receiving his Sword Excalibur. *John Hungerford Pollen.*
4. Sir Tristram and La Belle Iseult. *William Morris.*
5. The Death of Merlin. *Edward Burne-Jones.*
6. Sir Gawaine and the Three Damsels at the Fountain. *Rodham Spencer Stanhope.*
7. The Death of Arthur. *Arthur Hughes.*
8. Education of Arthur by Merlin. *William Riviere.*
9. Arthur's Wedding, with Incident of the White Hart. *William Riviere.*
10. King Arthur's First Victory with the Sword. *William Riviere.*
11. King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Sculpture. *Arthur Monro.*
12. Design for the Roof. *William Morris.*

This is a remarkable catalogue. It is not a catalogue of the unities. The most superficial scrutiny will show that the artists' names were unequal in value, and that the pictures, though linked by their subjects, were not just a natural whole, divided into sections. And yet a certain harmony did enter into the original scheme, one which could not be spoiled by any amplification, though it might suffer from misunderstanding and discord. Apart from other inequalities, it must be recorded that the inclusion of the work of Riviere, though a happy afterthought, justified by the results, stirred Rossetti to anger; but he was aggrieved already. The Union, as a body, had taken a very natural course in attempting to fill all the bays with decorations. Rossetti's own picture had been left unfinished, surrendered, in fact, to the destroyer as soon as the paint of the beautiful but imperfect manifestation was dry. It seems incontrovertible that Rossetti lost heart as soon as he learnt that the frescoes had been executed on a surface unfitted to receive them, and therefore he never made any serious effort to cope with the troubles which afterwards arose. The principles of art professed by Rossetti and Riviere were divergent; this added fuel to the fire of misfortune. What with the corrosion of the atmosphere acting through the walls, the perversity of men proposing this or that within them, the discussions about expenditure and so forth which filled the air, the artistic temperament displayed itself in ebullitions of distress which culminated in despair. After every conceivable plan had been sifted whereby the frescoes might be completed and saved, or saved and completed, after commissions had met, committees reported, emissaries had been dispatched, confidences given, all the interchanges between a state of peace and a state of war indulged in, Rossetti wrote to Oxford in these uncompromising terms: "The one remedy for all is now whitewash, and I shall be happy to hear of its application."

This letter was not written till June 10, 1871. If it sums up the agitations of some fourteen years, such a period is brief indeed in the long life of art. That life persists, truth to tell, in the fragmentary work of Rossetti at Oxford, with a force sufficient to annul these passing trials and dissensions. It persists, too, in the lines and contours, nobly, gracefully painted, with modest patience, by Edward Burne-Jones, whose modesty yearned for appreciation, whose patience achieved it. Life persists, indeed, in everything which was done, even in what was left undone, by Morris and the rest of the gallant band. Such is the vitality of art. And if anybody should doubt the essential value of the paintings, they must encounter an opposition of cultivated opinion, reinforced by the facts which have passed into history in favour of the Pre-Raphaelite ideas. For, as these have permeated the community, hard-headed business men have rivalled each other in the quest for satisfaction and possession. City fathers treasure the pictures they have acquired, and would pay lavishly for more, in Birmingham, Liverpool, or London, so true has it become, in our enlightened days, that joys which are for ever have a current price in the market.

The accounts which have been preserved of meetings, the copies of reports and correspondence, all relating to the sustained effort which had been made for beautifying the Union building, are voluminous enough. They can easily be summarized, omitting the friction which arose over details insignificant as the ridges over which the artists had gaily painted. Such details included questions of cost. The Union had charged its funds to the extent of £500 for the furthering of the work. This was put down to "executive expenses." It had been voted unanimously, ungrudgingly, and was not greatly exceeded. When the seven original frescoes were supplemented by the three from Riviere's brush, a private subscription lessened the expense which fell on the society, the officers of which replied to a hostile but not very accurate pamphlet attacking everybody concerned. The committee dwelt on the value of the decorations rather than on the financial rumours which were afloat, explained these as almost wholly baseless, and settled that part of the business by showing that any slight irregularities had been completely rectified by grateful votes and sensible decisions.

The pictures remained. Here the whole matter became serious again. It had to be admitted, as a result of the examinations of 1869 and 1870, that the original seven were in a deplorable condition. They had not been executed, technically speaking, in fresco, but in distemper, and the plaster was not specially prepared for the use of colour. Much injury had been wrought by the weather. Damp from the outside walls had caused disintegration. Some of the works were more damaged than others. Great fear ensued on account of the damp ; great, because the overwhelming opinion now prevailed that the paintings were essentially precious. The latest frescoes, those painted by Riviere, with his son's assistance, were in better case ; this fact brought hope to all who were working in the cause of preservation.

Fresh efforts were therefore made to save the pictures as a whole. Rossetti, however, would never fall in with any suggestion which involved recognition of the work of Riviere ; the Union, humbly but definitely, refused to countenance the destruction of any part of the work. A decision was taken, in the end, to abandon any attempt at restoration. It seemed possible still, by external measures, to prevent further decay. These measures were taken, and Morris gave all the assistance he could towards maintaining his work on the roof. Save for these efforts, the pictures were left, after 1872, to confront the chances of time. Photography has kept their outlines safe for future generations ; even, perhaps, their substance.

For this reason it will be worth while to examine what that substance is, and to outline the mystical and complicated story which the several artists adapted to their own devices. In this way the legend or epic must be taken as a whole, with the heroic King Arthur as the chief figure, although, in fact, neither of the three leading artists (Rossetti, Morris, Burne-Jones) touched the king at all, and his first appearance as a figure on the walls of the Union was from John Pollen's brush. Arthur Hughes provided the next study, but these two artists dealt with episodes late in point of time. William Riviere, who came in last of all, may be said to have started the king on his adventures. So, if the pictures are to be understood at all, it is with Riviere's work that the observer must begin.

King Arthur's origin as king of the Britons is a mystery never likely to be solved: according to some authorities, he was the son of Utherpendragon, King of England, and Igrayne, Duchess of Cornwall. Merlin the wizard, who represented himself as the son of a fallen angel, able to reveal all things, had foretold Arthur's birth and pleaded that he might educate him. In his Union fresco, Riviere showed Prince Arthur reclining at Merlin's feet in the attitude described in the ninth canto of the first book of Spenser's *Faërie Queene.* A skull, an hour-glass, and other magical effects occupy the foreground of the picture. Merlin under the rising moon shows the young prince a vision of his future greatness, foreshadowing the celebrated order of the knights.

Riviere's next picture—the episode, at King Arthur's wedding, of the White Hart—is naturally associated with the sculpture by Arthur Monro which can still be seen (as shown in this book) over a little side-doorway in the Union forecourt, once described as the principal entrance of the Union. It was for Guinevere's wedding that the famous Round Table was presented by Leodegraunce, her father, to King Arthur. Those who are learned, or are experts in mystical deduction, may see in this impressive sculptured group certain facts: the whole history, indeed, of the search for the knights, the failure to find them all, the selection of Sir Gawaine and Sir Tor to make up fifty, their homage to the king, and a great deal more, as set forth by the Rev. J. S. Sidebotham, a Union enthusiast, in 1859. The picture here given explains itself, perhaps more simply. Here is the king with seventeen of his knights in the attitude of prayer. Homage to an earthly monarch is scarcely indicated: the Table is quaintly depicted, as is the feast: but the king, with his orb and his sword and all the emblematic figuring above, is himself subjected, even whilst the central figure of a nobly religious composition, to the great conception of the Holy Grail.

The next episodes in the progress of Arthur through his earthly pilgrimage are those of the White Hart at his wedding, depicted by Riviere; then the gift of the marvellous sword, Excalibur, painted by Pollen; next comes Arthur's victory over his enemies with the sword, by Riviere again; finally, Arthur's death, by Hughes. The story of the White Hart belongs to the realm of fantasy, and speculation might range widely before the reason for its appeal to an artist would be clear. The tale ran that at the banquet for Arthur's wedding, which had taken place in spite of Merlin's warning concerning Sir Lancelot, a white hart, followed by a white brachet, or hound, came into the hall. The brachet tore the hart's flank, on which the hart overthrew one of the knights, who thereupon seized the brachet, left the hall, and mounted his horse, taking the brachet with him. The king seemed discomfited by this affair, as if he had met with a bad omen: and no doubt there is a foreshadowing of evil here. After this, in Arthur's career, came the gift of the sword Excalibur, by the Lady of the Lake, once again in accordance with the prophecy of Merlin, who conditioned his boon, as usual, with warnings. This beautiful legend had already brought Pollen, as one of the earlier painters, to materialize a poet's vision, the vision which Tennyson brought to life in Arthur's words to the knight, Sir Bedivere:

"Thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer morn, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword, and how I rode across,
And took it, and have worn it, like a king. . . ."

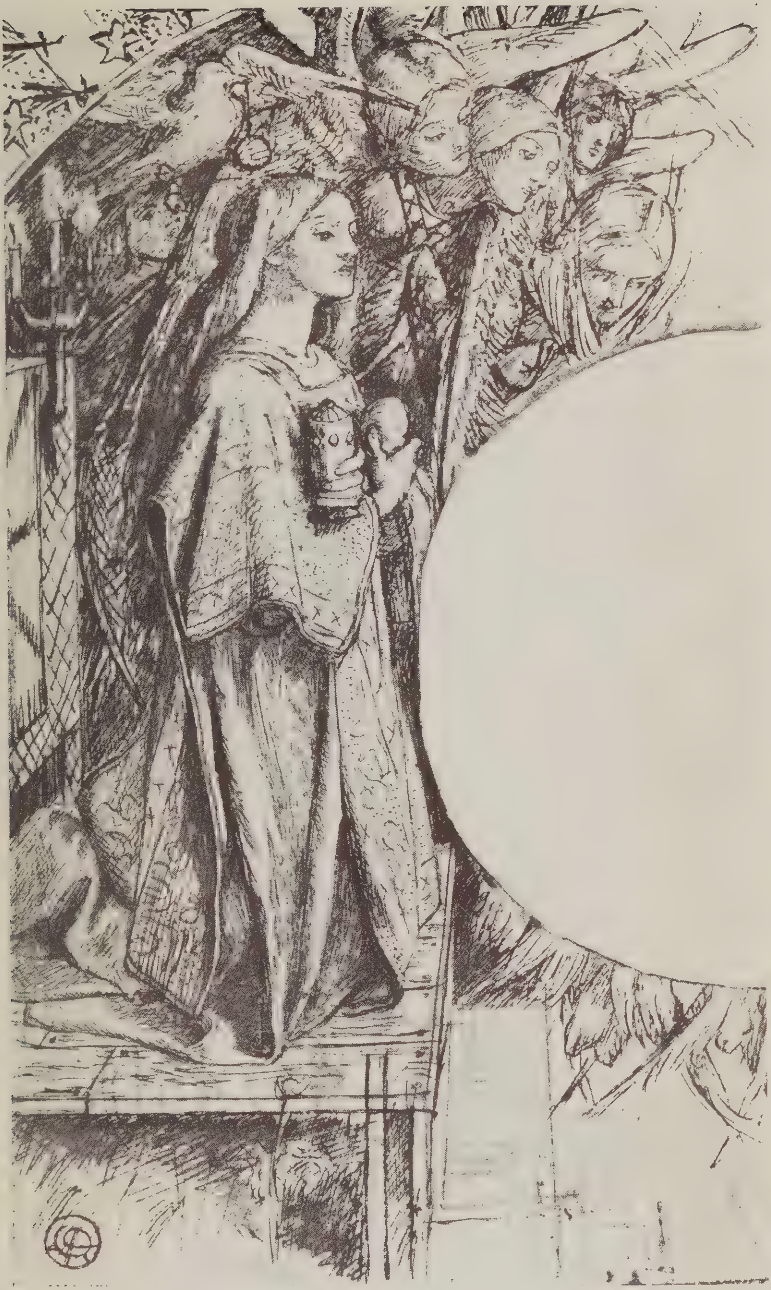
Later it fell to Riviere to show how Arthur could wield the sword like a king, in a fresco which yielded better results to the photographer than any. The painting, so far as it can be seen, tells its story without effort: showing how the king brandished his mighty and magical blade " which shone like thirty torches." This, as long as he kept the scabbard, gave to the king an invincible power.

Having carried King Arthur so far, the adventures of some of his knights, as shown in the frescoes, may here be interpolated.

The contribution of Gabriel Rossetti, " The Vision of Sir Lancelot," in spite of incompleteness, attained the quality of greatness in the opinion of many critics. Rossetti himself was wont to declare that he had never done anything better. In the photographic reproduction, something of the charm and beauty of the design can still be seen, and the picture should be studied in relation to the other studies by Rossetti which have by chance survived. Rossetti's plans for the Union had also included a fresco of " Sir Galahad and the Sangrael," and the idea of this can also be seen in an existing sketch. But now to the story of Sir Lancelot's vision.

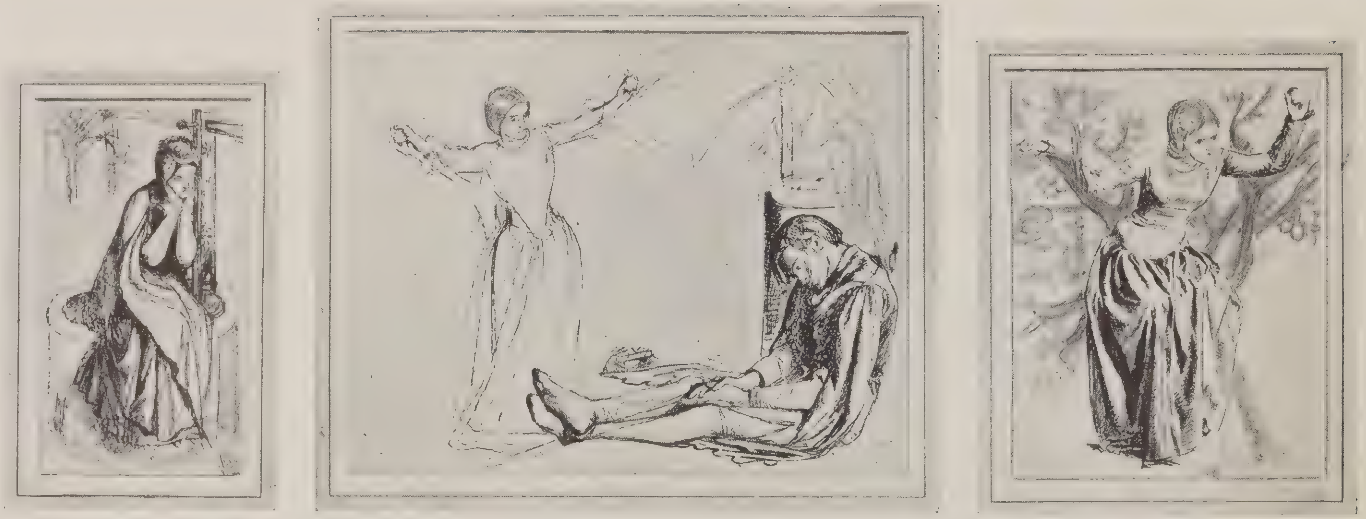
The Grail or Holy Dish was supposed to be the vessel in which the Paschal Lamb was placed at the Last Supper, and was said to have been brought to England by Joseph of Arimathæa. To " achieve the Grail," which worked miraculous cures, was an object of ambition among the several knights. Sir Lancelot, after strange encounters in field or forest, came to a castle: within the castle, which he succeeded in penetrating, he came at last to a closed door, and he knew that the Grail must be within. He prayed that, despite his foul sins, he might see it.

A voice forbade his entrance, but he was allowed to look within the chamber. He saw the holy vessel and swooned. He saw it in the likeness of the sacrifice of the Mass. Sir Lancelot lay in trance for twenty-four days. His vision is



THE ANGEL OF THE GRAIL.

From the Study by Dante Gabriel Rossetti for the Wall-painting in the Oxford Union.
Reproduced by permission of Charles Ricketts, A.R.A.



THREE STUDIES OF GUINEVERE AND LANCELOT BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI FOR THE WALL. PAINTING IN THE OXFORD UNION.

Reproduced by permission of the Art Committee, Birmingham.

expressed in artistic parable by Rossetti. As the whole story teems with magic, difficult to accept, and with mysticism hard to follow, it is something indeed if a moral lesson emerges from the picture, and to get at that, one must be sure of the meaning. The vision showed to Lancelot the contrast between pleasure and piety, between sensuous delights and the life of virtue. Delight, which involved the dishonour of another, was represented by the woman's figure, Guinevere's, and the fruit she holds is the apple of temptation. The figure and the accessories farthest away from Lancelot, asleep, represent the Holy Grail: it is the call to honour and duty, and the choice of Lancelot most men know, for his story is one of the most famous in the realm of fable. Sir Lancelot, in the moral sense, disastrously failed, and yet, of course, his guilty love for Guinevere was just that part of the story which had the greatest attraction for romanticists of every type, and the artist did all he could to bring the glamour of poetic rapture into his picture too. In estimating the value of what Rossetti accomplished, the imagination must do some rather difficult work: must supply, for instance, the vanished colouring, which in the Pre-Raphaelite sense of values was almost as important as the ideas to be conveyed. Looking deeper, imagination must meet morality and mysticism at least half-way.

The episode of Sir Tristram, showing forth his passion for La Belle Iseult, is akin to the work of Rossetti as far as the romantic glamour is concerned, but the picture by William Morris had no religious motive. It exemplified the resources of the artist in colouring and execution, rather than inspiration due to the lofty ideal which all the artists were trying to uphold. The fair Iseult, daughter of Anguish, king of Ireland, was betrothed to King Marke of Cornwall. Sir Tristram was sent to be conductor to her wedding, which duly took place. But ever Sir Tristram and La Belle Iseult loved together. Although another knight, Sir Palomydes, interposed his own devotion, and King Marke himself counted for little, the fray which followed between the rival knights left Sir Palomydes disconsolate, Sir Tristram victorious, and Iseult faithful in unfaith. Sir Palomydes was sent back to the court with a heavy heart, his life spared by Sir Tristram for the sake of Iseult. " Recommend me unto Queen Guinevere," she said, " and tell her that I send her word, that there be within the land four lovers ; that is, Sir Lancelot of the Lake and Queen Guinevere, and Sir Tristram de Lyones and Queen Iseult."

The picture made by William Morris had this story for its motive, but he was really guided by principles of artistic possibility in choosing this particular theme. To him the ideals of chivalry were as important as they were to the rest, but his chief concern was for decorative effect. He wanted to colour the walls of the Union with images of surpassing brilliance, and in his hands the decoration grew in boldness as he proceeded. The human figures of Tristram and La Belle Iseult tell no story now. Perhaps they never did. Yet when Holman Hunt vouched for the striking originality of the design and for the many gifts displayed by the artist who composed and executed it, imagination may well attempt the filling up of the details from those impressions which remain, of a flowery and umbrageous scene in which the characteristic methods of the poet-designer are freely displayed. It was Morris who made the greatest efforts—when destruction seemed to approach all the work that had been done—to repair the mischief. His own design for the roof suffered less than the frescoes, and could always at least be repainted without infringing any artistic principle: which things may still be considered with advantage by those who manage the Union and have reverence for the past. For signs of the original beauty and brilliancy of the fresco of Sir Tristram are traceable still.

Two more of the Union designs, in which Sir Pelleas and Sir Gawaine were heroes, were adventures of artists into the sphere of romantic love. The story of Sir Pelleas and the

Lady Etarde was Valentine Prinsep's. The story of Sir Gawaine and the fountain was Spencer Stanhope's. Sir Pelleas, according to the chronicles, chose the fair Etarde as his sovereign lady; but Etarde had scorn for him and his love. He won honours in every joust for her, but still she scorned him, even when he gave himself up as prisoner to the knights he had defeated in order that he might be taken to her, even to Etarde. He was so taken, a prisoner, as in Prinsep's picture, and still the lady scorned him. She said she would never love him, though he should die for her. But the Lady of the Lake disenchanted Pelleas, and Etarde, knowing that he had ceased to love her, died of sorrow.

The story of Sir Gawaine and the three damsels at the fountain, Stanhope's contribution, shows how Sir Ewaine, one of Arthur's knights, was banished, and how Sir Gawaine shared his banishment. The two knights sought the forest of Arroy, wherein they had many adventures. At the head of a fountain, after they had fought with Marhaus, son of the king of Ireland, and become reconciled, the knights, now three in number, met with three damsels. These offered themselves as companions who would bring them strange fortune. One was threescore, one was thirty, one only fifteen years old. This last, arrayed in scarlet, the fairest of all, fell to the lot of Gawaine, whose fortune seemed, in the eyes of poets who chronicled such joys, to raise him above the happiness of any man in the world.

The death of Merlin, that mysterious master of so many fates, was the subject which had Burne-Jones for its exponent. Burne-Jones painted slowly, but as the effort took shape it found many admirers and constantly increased in excellence. This was a famous story, how Merlin the wise met his death through folly: through doting love for Nimue. The nymph by artifice gained knowledge of his secrets, till she lured him to a well in the forest, and there he met his death. In this well he died under a stone thrust upon him in such a manner that with all his wizardry he could not raise it. Merlin's end is given in the words of Tennyson's *Vivien:*

> "Then, crying, 'I have made his glory mine,'
> And shrieking out 'O fool,' the harlot leapt
> Adown the forest, and the thicket closed
> Behind her, and the forest echoed 'Fool.'"

To conclude the whole series, Arthur Hughes gave to the Union his conception of "The Death of Arthur," on which theme much ingenuity has been expended in poetry and prose. The intrigues of Sir Lancelot having been discovered, much confusion ensued. Sir Lancelot fled. The king pursued. In the king's absence Sir Mordred acted the usurper. Warned by a dream, Arthur made a pact with Sir Mordred, though each distrusted the other. Soon a fray broke out in which Sir Mordred was slain and the king was wounded unto death. Knowing his end to be near, the king, left with one follower only, Sir Bedivere, besought this knight to take his sword, Excalibur, and cast it into the lake. When this command was obeyed, an arm and a hand came above the water, caught the sword, brandished it three times, and vanished with it. Then Sir Bedivere at the king's request helped him to the water-side, "where was a little barge with three fair ladies in it." These were three queens, to wit, Arthur's sister, the queen of Northgalis, and the queen of "Wast Lands," and one took his head in her lap. So passed Arthur, mysteriously, and was buried, it may be, in the Isle of Avilion. Sir Bedivere only knew that he was left alone, and thus he breathed out his grief:

> "For now I see the true old times are dead,
> When every morning brought a noble chance,
> When every chance brought out a noble knight,
> Such times have been not since the light that led
> The holy elders with the gift of myrrh.
> But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
> Which was an image of the mighty world."
>
> TENNYSON.

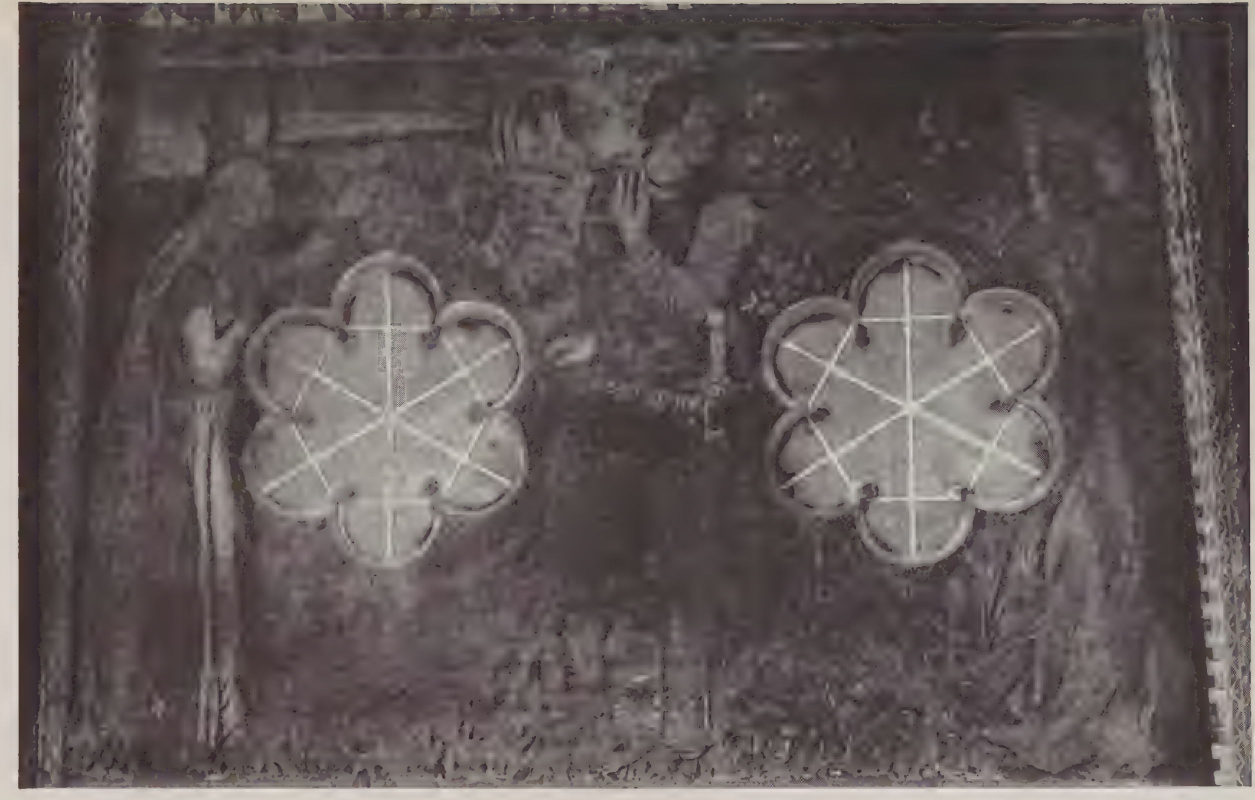
These words of the great Victorian poet are applicable here, for sun and shade, with their human counterparts of joy and sorrow, wisdom and folly, goodness and evil, are in all these pictures. In the series as a whole the excellences and the mannerisms of a school were freely displayed. They were, and in a sense they are still, a precious possession. If "praising what is lost," in Shakespeare's phrase, "makes the remembrance dear," shall we not satisfy the cravings of affection by trying to regain what may not be wholly lost and is also worthy of praise? Inequalities and imperfections had revealed themselves as the work went on. These were reflected in the divisions which arose: but critical divisions are often a proof of life. These very divisions are often the preparatory stage in a process which ends in a common consent to admire, as Mr. C. J. Holmes, in a prefatory note to Mr. Holman Hunt's study of these frescoes, pointed out.* He urged, further, that by the circumstances of their production, this Arthurian cycle was linked more than anything with Oxford life, at a time when Oxford appeared as "the focus of artistic life and energy in England." He added that these frescoes were the most important corporate effort of the Pre-Raphaelites. "The paintings have a value for the world outside Oxford, for their inequalities are redeemed by beautiful and majestic passages of an order that is rare in the art of this or any other country."

If any further justification for the frescoes be needed, it may be read between the lines of the stories which have been told, exemplifying, as they do, the connexion between literature and art of which Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris thought so much. All that the pictures might yield could not be seen on the surface. The stories, with their fantasies and their wonders, always needed something sympathetic in the soul for their understanding. This sympathy was resolutely cultivated in the Victorian age, and the legendary Arthur, by natural descent, has in these days become potent in the counsels of a nation. Here it must be recorded that the Union, as a society, seeing its pictures fade, made many efforts to arrest the destruction which seemed inevitable. Meetings were held. Negotiations were entered into. These excursions and alarms continued for years: but the precious frescoes went from bad to worse.

---

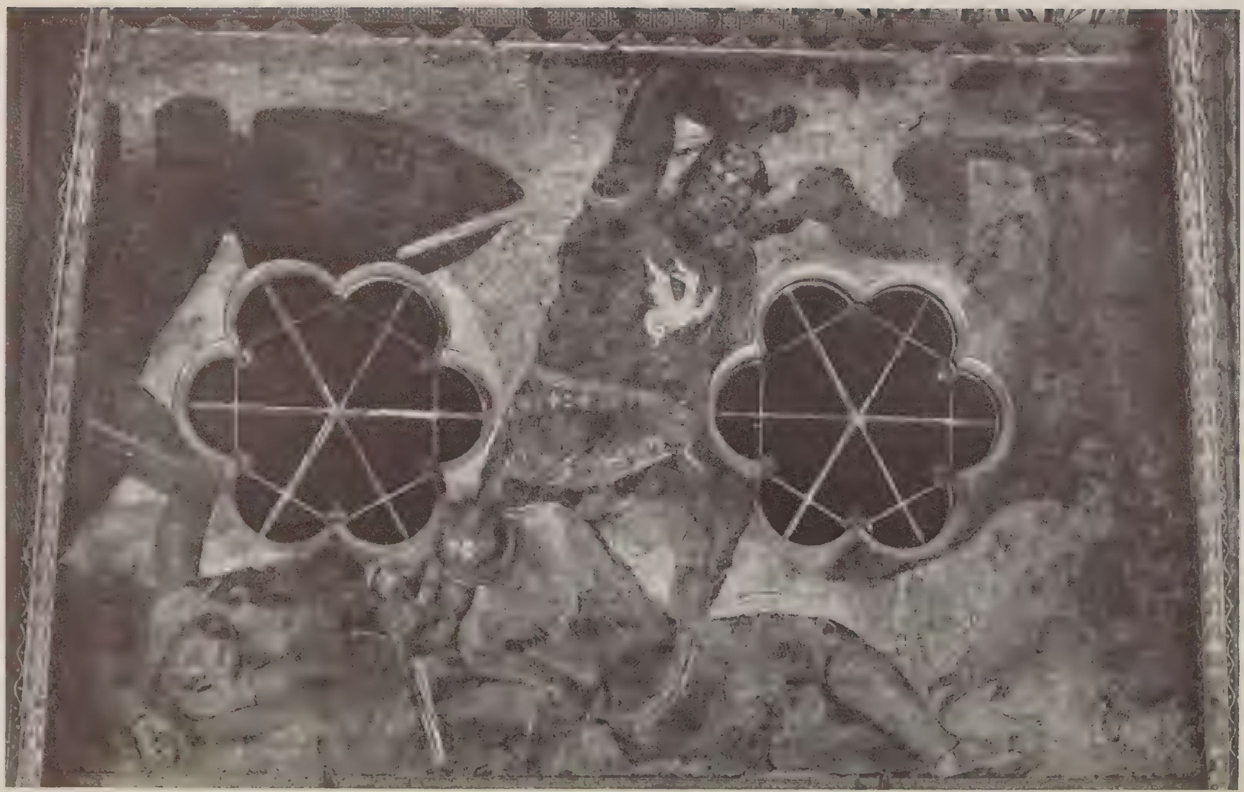
* *The Story of the Pictures.* By W. Holman Hunt, O.M., D.C.L. Oxford, 1906.

There is a ring of disappointment in the reports which record the failure of negotiations which had for their object the completion or restoration of the pictures while yet there should be time. This disappointment was not shared by all. Francis Jeune of Balliol, for instance, a man of real capacity, who did a good deal for the Union as treasurer and President between 1861 and 1864, frankly declared that the frescoes were "hideous," and that he with his Philistine brethren cared nothing at all what might become of them. He is remembered still as a notable judge; perhaps, in justice, it is as well that as Mr. Justice Jeune, or as Lord St. Helier, he never had to consider the separation of the real from the ideal; he was concerned with other bills of divorcement; he, too, though in one sense a maritime expert, might candidly have confessed that on the *terra firma* of art he would always have been utterly at sea. It is interesting to note that in this matter he remained unrepentant. But his name must be mentioned because he represented a type, and his ability could not be gainsaid. When he or his friends thought Rossetti and all his works a nuisance, it was all for the best that they should get up and say so. The Union stood for the truth, and if the truth was unpleasant it had to be faced. Only, if it was untrue, the onus of proof lay on those who would find ironical laughter against them. As an instance of the differences of opinion which were prevalent, the committee at one time proposed that the frescoes should be covered over



SIR PELLEAS AND THE LADY ETARDE.

From a Photograph of the Wall-painting by Val. C. Prinsep, R.A., in the present Library of the Oxford Union.



KING ARTHUR'S FIRST VICTORY WITH THE SWORD.

From a Photograph of the Wall-painting by William Riviere in the present Library of the Oxford Union.

with pomegranate paper designed by Mr. Morris. The proposal was fiercely resisted. Reginald Copleston, later Bishop of Calcutta, led the opposition in a speech which was much admired. The Morris pictures might be covered by Morris wall-paper, but what about poor Mr. Ruskin? Were not his feelings to be considered? Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett of Christ Church advocated the concealment of the pictures and quoted an eminent art-critic. "Look," he said, "at a tragedy queen in an impossible attitude." "I looked," said a subsequent speaker, "not at the frescoes, but at the platform, and I beheld a tragedy king in an attitude which I would *had* been impossible!"

There is no sign, happily, that real indifference to the artistic claim was shared by the society as a whole at any time. The ring of the reports, in fact, sounded notes deeper than those of mere disappointment. Accents of consolation, of possible hope, renewed the concern and the activity of more than the few. The majority were actuated by common sense. Actual and very valuable work had been done. Those who were not experts might well take the word of Ruskin for this. So it came to pass that indifference was swept away by those who cared, and there were some who cared not only for the best that was in the frescoes as works of art, but quite as much for the Union as a centre of light and idealism which these fine efforts embodied. As we pass lightly over the intermittent attempts at revival, restoration, or reproduction, all abortive, which recurred from generation to generation, it is interesting to read in a sketch prefixed to the society's rules as recently as 1919 the official statement that there attaches to these decorations "a somewhat pathetic interest." Mr. J. R. Thursfield, who conducted the correspondence with Mr. Rossetti in 1871, described the business in stronger terms. He called it "disastrous." It is but a step from comedy to tragedy. Common sense will decline to bewail these losses The outstanding fact remains that the paintings were freely offered and freely executed, and that they proved a most remarkable contribution to the artistic history of the time.

In matters artistic, Mr. Edmund Gosse has reminded us, many a reputation has been exalted within the period of half a century, many have been depressed. " In face of this whirlwind of doctrine the public ceases to know whether it is on its head or on its feet." As a remedy, Mr. Gosse recommends the incessant exploration of the by-ways of literary history and analysis of the vagaries of literary character. This is wise counsel, and its wisdom has an obvious application. The parallels of the artistic life run very close to one another. Books, in their relation to painting, are fortunate, for their messages can be reproduced in various ways without hurting the pride of their makers. In desiring—and many will so desire—that ways may be found to recreate the Union frescoes in some form, it is important to remember, however, that Rossetti himself resisted any such thing on principle, with a violence which was, perhaps, one of his vagaries. Moreover, Mr. C. J. Holmes declared—when congratulating the Union on the photographs of 1906, undertaken under adverse circumstances, but successfully undertaken, with ideas of future preservation specially in view—that " restoration was out of the question. A mere breath upon the surface, while insufficient to blow away the cobwebs, was yet enough to make the tattered fragments of the painting fall down in dust. Nor could the work be done over again had such a vandalism been contemplated."

And yet there does survive, it may be in Rome or Florence, it may be in London or Oxford, the belief that ideas, which are once committed to perishable forms, may resume their shape long after decay has apparently set in. Science brings forward here her newest aids. There have been of late years many recrudescences of artistic forms. Go into St. Paul's, and you will find modern mosaics quietly glowing in the gloom. Go into Christ Church at Oxford, you will see the figures of this wonderful Pre-Raphaelite movement gleaming in the windows; or into the chapel of Exeter College, where the tapestry of the Wise Men shines. There let us pause. In one of these forms reproduction of these frescoes is surely possible.

CHAPTER XI

THE INFLUENCE AND THE MIND OF THE UNION : SCHOLARS, STATESMEN, AND A FUTURE KING : THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1860 AND 1870 SHOWS DEVELOPMENTS NATIONAL, POLITICAL AND GENERAL.

INFLUENCE of the Union became in Oxford much like the power of the Press in larger life, for during these first fifty years certain achievements were reckoned to its credit because of its contact with that life in many ways. The University of the nineteenth century (and after) has smarted under the lash of current criticism, and almost suffers, as if from injustice, by being regarded as a place where much time is wasted and where men devote themselves chiefly to the acquirement of habits not easily adaptable to those of the world.

It would be well if this indictment could be met, whether it belongs to yesterday or to-day. No answer is given when the academic or visionary mind finds fault with business precepts or business methods or even business results as such. After all, a very practical world can take care of itself. The best defence of Oxford must be of service definitely contributed to the well-being of the nation. Where service has been defective it may, with effort, perhaps, be amended. As a national institution, not as a privileged enclosure, Oxford must stand or fall. There happens to be a good deal to be considered which is favourable to the University in this matter, and the Union takes part in the vindication by exhibiting a history which seems no mere reflection but is very like the mirror itself.

The description of the University as " national " is official. As national, Oxford has long been regarded in the House of Commons. In this spirit does the Oxford man promptly answer to any patriotic call. By members, therefore of a national University, anxiety is naturally felt when failure to fulfil an essential function, roughly charged, is widely credited. Of course allowances will be made by those who launch the accusation. Nothing is quite right as it stands. The business world knows that. As to the general confusion in which men live ; only after free enquiry can you expect to find out a remedy. Allowances, therefore, must not only be made for the perversity of things as they are everywhere, but even more for those conditions which are manifestly the inheritance of a remoter time. Something beyond mere allowance, a certain respect, is due to evolution.

Professional experts in Oxford have sometimes gone to the other extreme. They have neglected the issues of active, every-day life. Their lecture-rooms have been replicas chiefly of those remote corridors of time which we call the past. *Non tali auxilio, non defensoribus istis.* Not through these could the University make out its case when attacked. Herein it is the Union which had long given a definite lead by keeping open the channels of communication between idealism and action, between politics theoretical and practical, between Oxford and the world. In some circles, to this day, learning for its own sake is the true function of an academy, from which point of view it is almost sacrilege if account be taken of what a man's individual livelihood requires. With this force at work behind the scenes, it still seems to be an open question as to what the University may be able to do for a man and so for the nation which consists of men.

Links are forged in some countries between the universities, professions, and even commerce. At Oxford things are differently arranged ; a man may even find his Oxford record a drawback owing to incomplete adjustments. This did affect many, in a special degree, during the century now past; but it was the Union which really began a constructive advance away from this position, sometimes by encouraging the frankest criticism of the University itself. Thus did freedom show symptoms of a wider growth.

This freedom involved an insatiable curiosity which stamped with its impress what may be called the Union mind, the mind of men who took nothing for granted and refused to jump to conclusions when disconcerting questions were raised. Such questions as the ultimate usefulness of universities, of Oxford more especially, involving many side-issues, were prominent for a long series of years. Each new era brought recurrent problems into a new focus. The theory that Oxford belonged to the nation was never lost sight of by the Union.

To cavillers who complained that a living touch with affairs was largely wanting, the Union's own success supplied some striking evidence on the other side. Opportunities obtained in the debates, not forgetting interests enlarged and friendships formed, became assets of real value and opened the doors of many professions. The Union mind would have proved itself far from insatiable if it had been satisfied with this. And it was not satisfied.

An impartial reasoning bent received, in practice, the greater grace of caution. On the surface, many an Oxford custom seemed indefensible from any point of view. That is why there was a perpetual clamour for reform, and that is why special commissions were so often appointed by the State. But somehow it followed that in the Union, which did not lack zealots who could speak forcibly, the general vote on anything resembling governmental interference took the form of a vehement "Hands off!" The importance of all this lay, not in the vote, but in the discussion, whereby it was nearly always proved to zealots, who urged sweeping changes and reforms, that ventilation of the subject was enough; changes might come, might even be overdue; but, on consideration, these changes should be slow. These debates never took place without intensifying the feeling that there was much good in Oxford with all its anomalies, the evils of which were practically annulled by the great qualities of men who did great work in spite of them.

All this points to further growth in the individual Union temperament. The most ardent reformer hesitated, as he tested facts and views by contrasting them with others, to side with the iconoclast. He learned that to try to rush things forward too fast is equivalent to pushing them back. It dawned on him that if you wanted to build Oxford again you would have to begin by unbuilding it, and that though destruction might be relatively easy, even that could not be accomplished in a day. This means that the Union training brought a sense of proportion and the gift of patience.

The training gave something more. It taught toleration. Patience is really one form of toleration, and that line of argument suggests the way in which the youth of one period after another encouraged the opening up of every avenue of change, and then accepted its closing till a more convenient season.

And yet, through the gaps thus made, ideas escaped. These did their work in time, like seed which travels on the wind and plants itself. From 1860 onwards, classical studies, the marriage of fellows, the admission of women-students, the management of colleges, the awarding of scholarships—many a custom or development which affected the University or seemed to fly in the face of fairness and common sense—ran the gauntlet in debate, and the resultant advice of the Union generally was to leave them alone.

Sixty years later, we see how opinion has worked on these very things. Classics are no longer supreme. Married fellows abound. The management of colleges has not greatly altered, but women have gained privileges which in 1860 were hardly dreamed of, and the scholarship system is in the melting-pot. These changes may be good or bad ; the Union mind sees in them subjects for ever-fresh developments ; for the great thing is to keep consideration open, and also to keep life moving. The wisdom of gradual change has been proved specially applicable to Oxford. There have been no violent revolutions. If the main contentions of Victorian reformers have been conceded, there is still a good deal to be done. The policy of open discussion has been vindicated ; but the contributions of youth to further decisions are likely to become of greater importance. This is the reason for dwelling on the mind of the Union as a lively thing, with great possibilities before it of influencing the University and reconciling academic interests also with national needs. In actual fact, since 1920, undergraduates have insisted on being heard in the management of colleges. Youth, they say, is really in the saddle now. All the more must it learn how to ride and at what pace. The going has been fairly good, so far.

The Royal Commission of 1922 has made it clear that between 1860 and 1920—two dates of great importance—great advances towards the national conception were made. There is a certain significance in the year 1860, because Queen Victoria's eldest son then became a member of Christ Church, and the monarchy of that period seemed certainly established to the sense of the majority as a necessary part of the national structure. By the year 1920 the nation had become utterly bewildered, politically speaking, as the result of a world-wide convulsion. Yet the University held on, and it still holds. In this period of sixty years, University questions, as they may be studied in the debates at the Union, show a constant advance of opinion, and with this advance of opinion they also show continual and constructive efforts towards meeting national needs.

There was always at work the influence of plain-speaking. The energy of its leading members made the Union a reforming influence in Oxford life. Official assemblies had advantages and deserved respect; but they were not free; vested interests often controlled them. Disinterestedness, a leading Oxford lecturer observes, is the true aim of a University. This, in relation to studies, is forcible and fair. In internal matters however, especially as regards the early part of this period, the constitution of these official assemblies forbade impartiality.

Youth had one of its greatest advantages here. Discussion of the frankest nature is necessary for the forming of judgments, and those who gravitated towards the Union for its debates were those who happened to care for this development of the character. They were drawn from the more intelligent. They represented variations, very often, from the political type which sometimes dominated the proceedings. Between 1860 and 1870 names as striking as those of Bywater or Creighton, Caird or Strachan-Davidson, Bryce or Ilbert appear in connexion with the library; the library was becoming more and more an institution of special importance; and the finest qualities of scholarship were latent in such men.

Thus the development of the Union mind became a truly composite affair. The things encompassed were manifold, even though the attempt to achieve something artistic, and to advertise the Union's comprehensiveness in that way, had proved a practical failure. Looking round the University generally, there were times within the Union when consideration of what the University ought to be was taken very seriously. Some men really wanted to get things altered. These were the men who kept things moving.

The lists of Union debates over this prolonged period show a recurrent concern for practical things. There were, for example, the inordinate expenses of Oxford life. At one time the society had been mainly in the control of the man of ample means, but it gradually developed as a club for the rank and file. Men of excessive social smartness abjured it for this very reason, whilst others, with leanings the reverse of intellectual, would have been bored to tears if asked to take debating seriously. But the rank and file of the University found more and more a home away from home in the Union.

For many men, Oxford expenses were a crucial matter, and the Union gave increasingly all that it could, even more than was reasonable, for a very low subscription. In fact the Union mind went progressively to work. Begun with exclusiveness, it continued with comprehensiveness. Everything that tended to narrow the University was challenged in debate. A real interest in what the outside critic might be saying showed that the Union conscience, like the Union mind, was awake. The general feeling prevailed that something ought to be done.

And something was done, because public opinion, based on reason and knowledge, is in the long run an overmastering force. Patience had her work to do, and part of this work was done in the Union.

These facts would be meaningless now, so much having been accomplished towards the justification of the University, if it could be suggested that controversy can never break out again. But no. The University lives on in a threatened state, and those on the spot must look to it. When an appeal was made to Cæsar, and Cæsar replied with a report full of praise, in which royal commissioners vouched for thoroughgoing reforms already made, but far beyond that, accepted the University's valuation of its sacrifices through its members, who worked for learning's sake at wholly inadequate wages ; then indeed, the question of nationalization of the University took another form. Not only was a grand scheme of support from the State set forth. The plea was likewise eloquently made for national help in another shape.* And that is how

---

* See the Report of the Royal Commission on Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Chairman : The Right Hon. H. H. Asquith. Presented to Parliament, 1922.

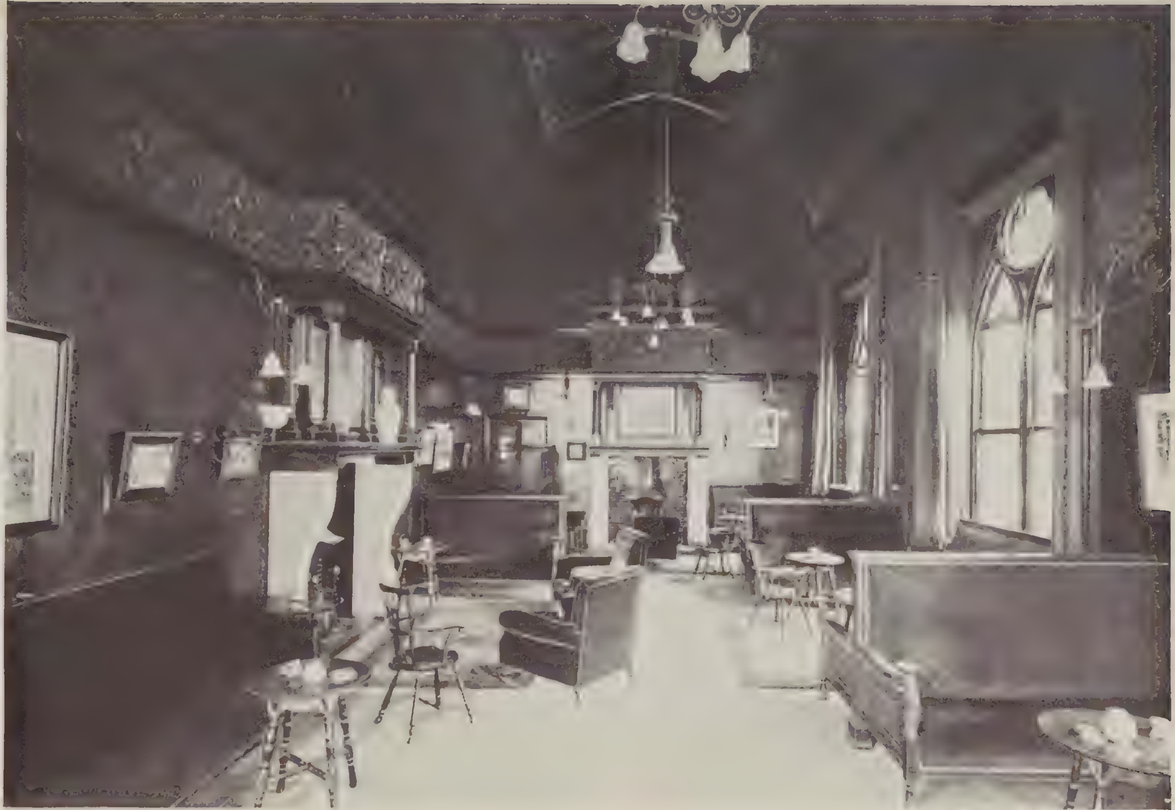
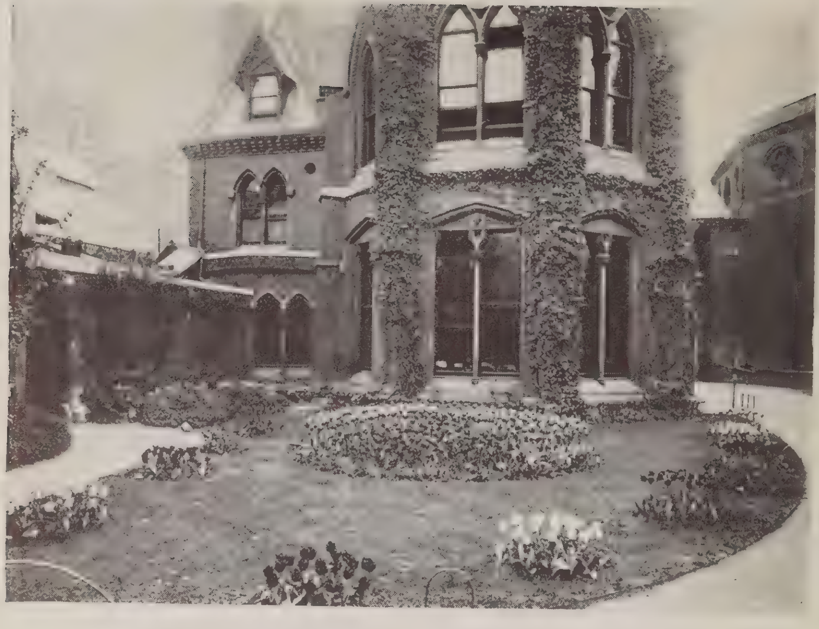


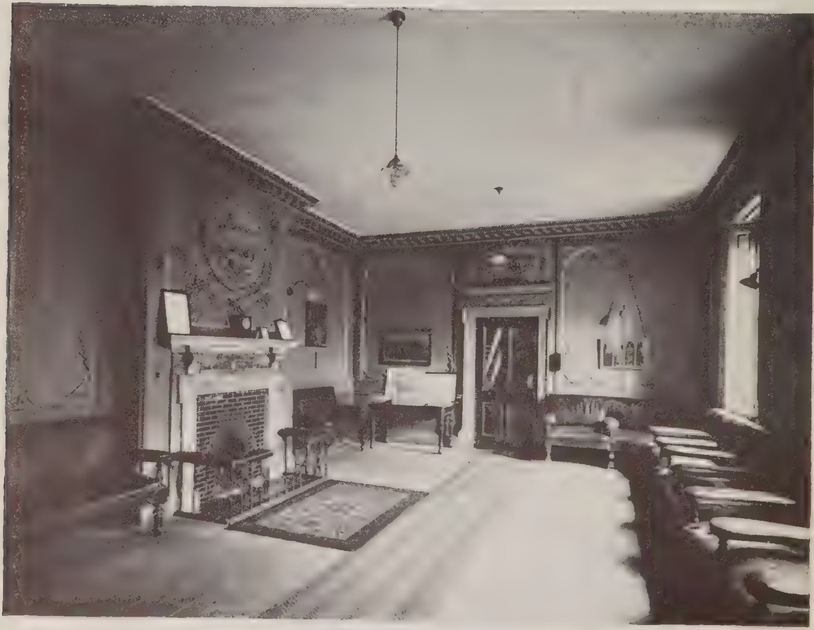
Photo. Hills & Saunders

THE SMOKING-ROOM.

Renewed and Redecorated, 1888.



THE OLD ROOMS FROM THE GARDEN.



Photos: Hills & Saunders.

THE OLD LOBBY.

things stand, as the Union approaches the second century of its existence.

It is clearly an opportunity for the Union to enter the field again. Each new generation has to consider afresh how large the University ought to be : what studies ought to be prosecuted : how endowments ought to be used : how abuses can be abolished : just as of old. The Union of 1863 (a representative date) wanted to get all these things thoroughly well aired, and when that had been done, asked, as a rule, that things should move slowly, and that anything derogatory to the University or affecting its independence should be shelved. In 1923 (again a representative date) we find these or similar questions asked again, in somewhat altered form, but with vehemence, in the outside world, in spite of manifold changes. " What would a Socialist Government do with the Universities ? " asks a professor at a Labour meeting in Yorkshire, and then he answers his own question. A Socialist Government, he says, would give the Universities a great deal more money, use them a great deal more, and leave them alone. The first two propositions met with approval at the meeting. The third did not.

The University of Oxford, with its national claims, could not in 1863 and cannot in 1923 be left alone, and for this reason it has always been a good thing that the internal problems of the University, since the Union came into existence, have been considered by a society which, with all its limitations, has generally contained many men who have knowledge and a few eager to see things fairly and squarely in the national interest. There can be no chronological confusion here, for history is all one. The University is alive and the Union with it. Hence the importance of the Union mind, whether this be looked at now, in a fleeting moment, or be regarded, as Euripides seemed to think we should regard all things, artistically, from a distance. The period now under review is just the one which marks the Union mind as being developed under difficulties. Every memoir of the Oxford which existed between 1850 and 1870 tells the same story. Freedom of speech was still a living issue.

Suppose for a moment that the victory gained by the Wilberforces, Wordsworths, Cecils, even by the admirable Creightons, had been greater than it really was, were there not visible proofs of resentment on the part of authority which checked any further advance? A straw will show which way the unfavourable wind blew. Long ago, conversing, the late Warden Brodrick of Merton observed that the solitary report of the debate on Protection in 1850, already summarized, owed its existence to the " vanity " of one man—Knatchbull-Hugessen (Lord Brabourne). Vanity? It is a curious idea, symptomatic of a day now gone for ever. The developing Union mind disapproved of these ridiculous repressions, but waited. Part of its equipment included prudence and patience, and if it was hardly complete without a temper, this temper could be kept under control. Incidentally, it happens that these repressions prevent the historian from discovering how many an Oxford man famous for his national work shaped in his youth, for the reporting of proceedings was forbidden, presumably on the ground that no utterance in youth could really be worthy of publication.

Such suppositions and reflections, if considered, must end in the realization of regrettable loss. However, the Union mind, the Union temper too, did progress in those qualities of balance and adaptability to circumstances without which education is useless. It is no part of the plea advanced in these pages that everything which passed in the Union was worthy of remembrance; but the follies and mistakes of youth are not really worse than those of maturer age, and they always present redeeming features. An ambition which in the end authority regarded as legitimate arose through cultivation of the arts and graces of speech, an ambition the more interesting because it belonged to men of varying types. Those who remember Lord Bryce in old age, renewing his youth daily as an informed talker on every subject under the sun, will feel the happier for recalling the fact that his great book "The Holy Roman Empire" was the expansion of an Oxford essay, and that this was the man who forwarded the bibliographical department of the Union with zest. As President, he upheld the dignity of the society in the subjects chosen for discussion: a politician, even a statesman in late life, he belonged to that class of Oxford men which sustained the reputation of a college in the schools and exhibited that of the Union as comprising something higher than politics which were mere partisanship.

By reference to such a man as James Bryce of Oriel the idea of ambition in connexion with the Union becomes more comprehensible. It may seem a lofty term for a young man's aim, but Oxford men will understand it, and men of older growth beyond Oxford will not only understand it but envy the youth who achieves it in the form of election to the presidency. These holders of the office, as the succession grew, gave it an accumulation of honour and added to it the halo of fresh hopes. This was in a way external. Internally, the ambition achieved might well be interpreted by an analysis of the Union mind. The years flew by. The presidency lasted for a single term, but it took all one's Oxford life to reach it. To succeed in it involved a further test. The mind that had learned patience had now to exercise it in impartiality. The wildest theories had to be listened to and the feeblest effort borne with. Fairness to all and favour to none had to be diligently pursued, and every college, every man, had to be looked upon with equal benevolence. The holder of that post might some day be driven into intolerance himself: but not there, not in that season, not under that spell of brief authority, which gave a lesson for life in one serene experience.

This was the society, such were the men, thus moulded were the minds for which a great University—nearer to the national heart than its controllers would have it—provided opportunities, reluctantly perhaps, but still it did provide them. In the national sense one special event of the year 1860, already mentioned, was of importance. The Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward the Seventh, came into residence at Christ Church, and promptly became a member of the Union. No doubt this was not unnoticed by the smartest of the smarter sets, and the membership of the Union may well have increased on this account, for such is the reverence sometimes paid even to the heel of a princely shoe : but happily the accession of the prince to the Union had a more interesting sequel, and this it is very pleasant to look back upon.

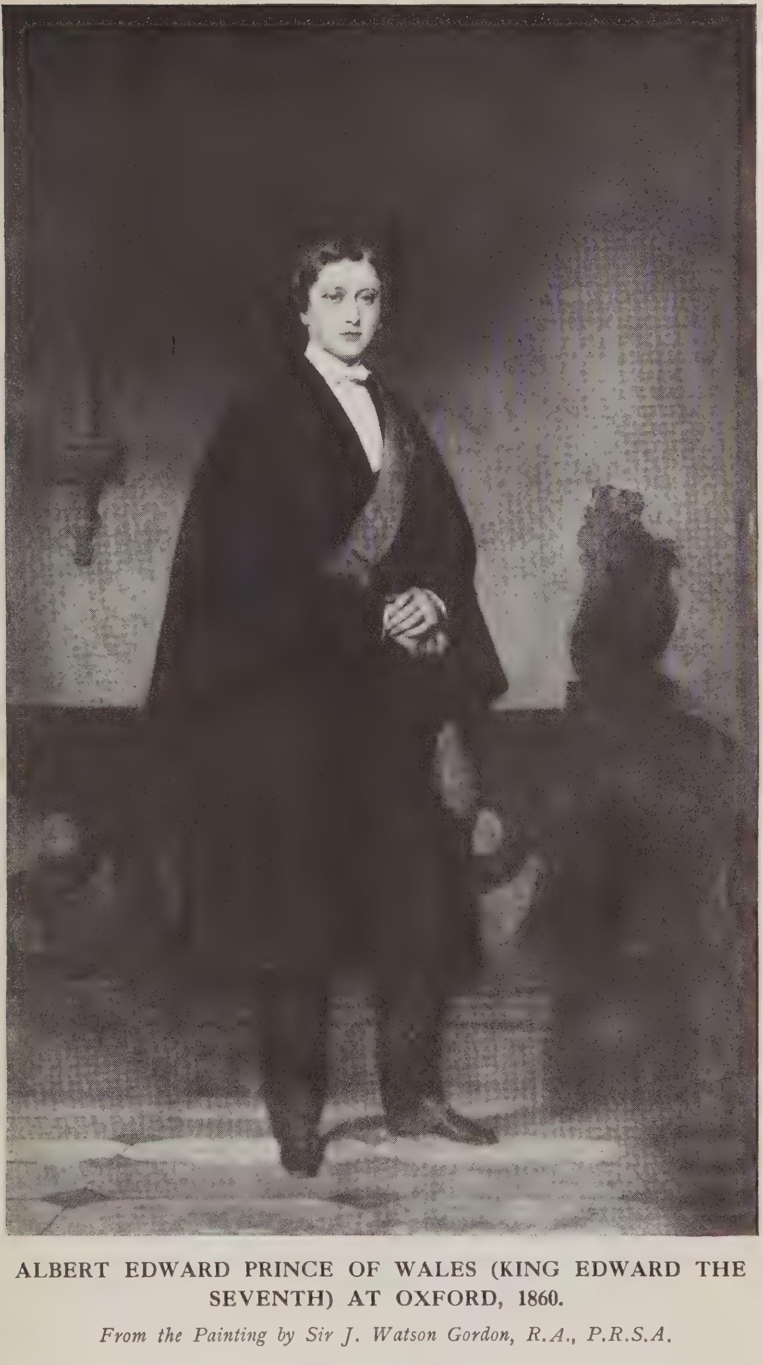
The Prince of Wales could not take part in the debates, but he was a constant attendant at them. The interest he took in them was by no means superficial. In these days the votes were taken by tellers who counted those on the right and left of the chair. Anyone not wishing to vote stood up. The prince was always accompanied by Colonel Bruce, and on the first occasion the tellers inquired if his vote should be counted. " Certainly not," said the equerry. The prince heard this, and offered to stand up, but was assured this was not necessary. In other ways he showed his desire to be treated as an ordinary member. During the whole of his Oxford career he was a regular attendant at the meetings of the Union, occupying a seat on the right of the President, and there was a tacit understanding that he was not otherwise to be recognized. There was one exception, however, to this : the cheering on his first appearance showed some exuberance, and the President, Beaumont, had some difficulty in moderating it.

No doubt the prince listened to some tedious speeches at the Union, but he also heard for the first time in his life arguments and presentments of ideas which had definite value for one in his unique position. The national side of the matter could not be lost sight of either. Queen Victoria had reigned less than a quarter of a century when the prince was matriculated, and the Prince Consort was still alive. The Queen's long widowhood began a year later. There had been moments since the Union had been founded when the monarchy had been unpopular, but this had been lived down. For the next forty years—the duration of the Queen's reign—hardly a motion adverse to Victorianism, reasonable or unreasonable, could be actually carried in the Union.

As recently as 1894 a rather strange proof of this was given to the present writer, who had advanced, one night in May, certain arguments in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. "This happens to be the Queen's birthday," said I, fully conscious that such a remark, though really in a way against myself, would please the house. It did. But I was not prepared for the hurricane of applause and cheering which brought men in from the garden and the streets to discover what orator had caused so tremendous a sensation. The cheering went on for several minutes and was repeated again and again. If it had died down sooner and I had uttered such magic words as "Windsor Castle," excitement would have been redoubled, and on this principle I could have kept the Union cheering for the rest of the evening. There was nothing really in what I had said: if it was an oratorical device, it recoiled upon myself, for I had merely happened to remember that it was the twenty-fourth of May. The terrific demonstration, echoes of which still ring in my ears, was equally a protest against the whole principle of Home Rule, which was deemed by the great majority present a form of disloyalty. When the cheering at last subsided, I declared how glad I had been to hear it, and paid due homage to the Queen. But I added that those who had shown this tremendous exuberance of devotion should remember that loyalty meant obedience to the law, and that when the law for Ireland was altered, as altered it would eventually be, those who professed loyalty would be bound in loyalty to accept it. If I got a cheer for that, it was from the minority, who certainly did not dismiss my reasoning with contempt. As certainly, *they* did not lose their heads over it. But the next day I met a well-known member of Christ Church, who asked me how I had managed to lift off the roof of the debating-hall. For he had happened to hear the commotion from one of the streets hard by. I was forced to confess that no marvel of phrasing or cleverness of reasoning had been the force exerted. Time has brought its revenges, perhaps, for Ireland, and subsequent speakers have even persuaded the house to different views, but in relation to what is now known as Victorianism this is certainly an episode which throws light on the development of the Union mind.

Returning to earlier days, the future King of England received, no doubt, such advantages from the Union discussions as availed him truly in his eventful life, a life which proved to a grateful country that seeds of statesmanship had been sown in him. It is certain that King Edward always felt grateful to the Union, and on leaving Oxford he expressed his gratitude by a gift of a hundred pounds which was spent on books. These books, suitably bound and duly adorned with the device of the Prince of Wales's feathers, are still in constant use at the Union. They consist of original classical texts, both Latin and Greek, and some of the editions represented are now quite difficult to obtain. They fall into the category of the practical and useful possessions of the Union, and they are none the worse for their unique if sentimental value.

Political interests were not touched, of course, by the presence or absence of the heir to the throne; but, in the peculiar conditions of the Victorian era, even a mere reflection of power in the making had real significance. At the same



ALBERT EDWARD PRINCE OF WALES (KING EDWARD THE SEVENTH) AT OXFORD, 1860.

From the Painting by Sir J. Watson Gordon, R.A., P.R.S.A.

Photo: Hills & Saunders.

THE UNION BUILDINGS, OXFORD.

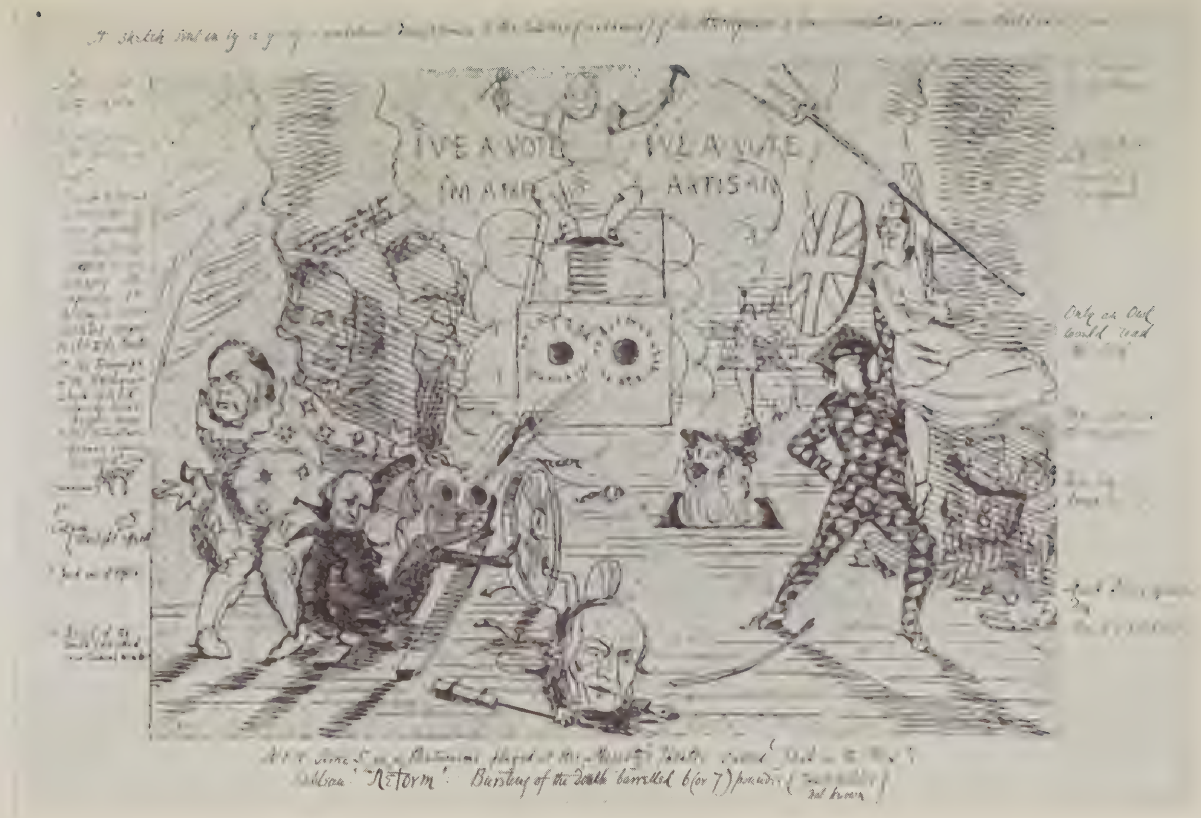
time Oxford progressed. Forward movements—the scattering of prejudices—forced their way slowly as activity was coloured by new ideas. By degrees even constitutional changes could be dealt with, free from any suspicion of disloyalty or treason.

The humours of the changing situation have come down to us. Perhaps it is not too much to say that these are permanently preserved in a series of remarkable cartoons, now the exclusive property of the Union. These were drawn by Mr. Sydney P. Hall of Pembroke College, an artist whose work later on received widespread recognition. He possessed a power which was entirely his own, and when he chose to apply this power to the oddly balanced forces which were active in Oxford life, the result declared itself in lines that were admirably drawn and in pictorial quips which were packed with genial though ironical allusiveness. The cartoons preserved at the Union are over forty in number. They are hung in the principal smoking-room. Of these some examples are here reproduced. Those have been chosen which reflect, more pointedly than the rest, the Union mind in contemplation or in action.

There was a principle, there was a spirit to be thought of. An artist looked round Oxford and noted with amused concern fresh moves towards freedom. He looked a little farther and felt conscious of the spirit of the age. Let it be taken for granted that those were right, in the main, who identified Oxford as a whole with another spirit, the opposite spirit, the spirit of captivity, if such a thing there be. A few years after these pictures were drawn, at the Union banquet of 1873, Bishop Durnford of Chichester told his audience that democracy was coming in : and as the venerable teacher was jeered at rather than cheered—on such an occasion too !—he resumed his seat in dismay, though he repeated his declaration before he did so, and said that everybody would have to accept what he said as true, whether they liked it or not.

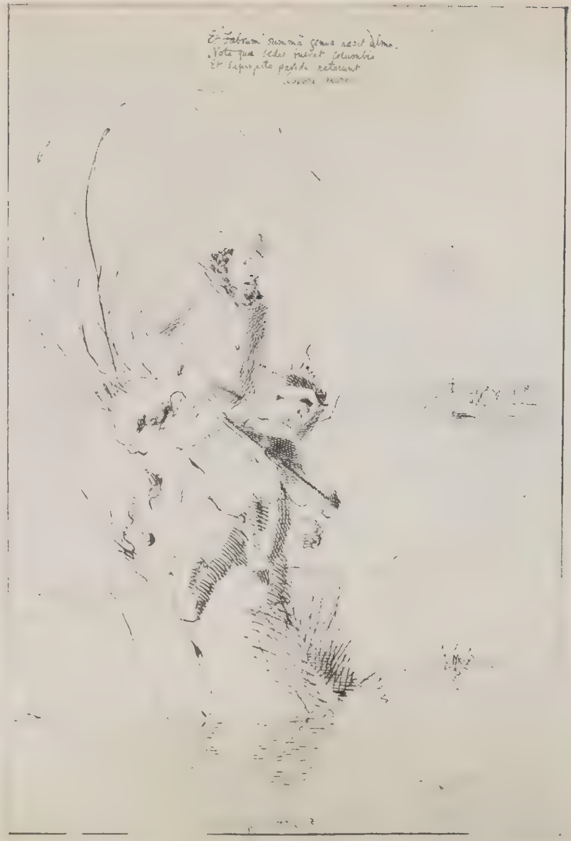
The spirit of the age could be treated in several ways by a satirical artist, and assurance as well as versatility characterized the offering, when Mr. Sydney Hall turned his attention to University problems. Many of the pictures in the series are politically curious, but the points which affected the Union were chiefly literary and academic, excepting as regards Mr. Gladstone. Thorold Rogers and Goldwin Smith, as reformers of differing types, were other notable, semi-political figures who appeared and reappeared in these cartoons; but neither of those famous professors could be claimed as having made any special mark in connexion with the Union. Goldwin Smith had taken a great interest in the debates, and had testified, in John Coleridge's time at the Union, to that speaker's gifts and excellences, but he had declared himself to be essentially "unoratorical." Another individual of special importance to Oxford and the Union, "Soapy Sam," the busy and ubiquitous Samuel Wilberforce, also received the artist's critical attention; and, of course, John Bright, Lord Derby, Mr. Disraeli, with other public men of the day, were represented in the topical jumble of conflicting interests and opinions. Elucidation of the whole extensive series was issued by the artist himself. Though the cartoons have long been familiar to many, the familiarity has only been that of the passing glance. Possibly if Mr. Hall's annotations were framed and placed beside the drawings their ingenuity would be more generally appreciated, for serious attention is their due. Mr. Hall, through these Oxford cartoons, obtained an appointment on the staff of *The Graphic*, and for many years his fine work in the public interest made his name a household word.

As these pictures show, the spirit of the age, trying to express itself in literature and in journalism, was determined to obtain outlets of which the Union debates were another side. It was in 1866 that certain Oxford men planned a new journal, *The Harlequin*. Eight numbers actually appeared. From 1866 onwards a good many efforts towards reasonable

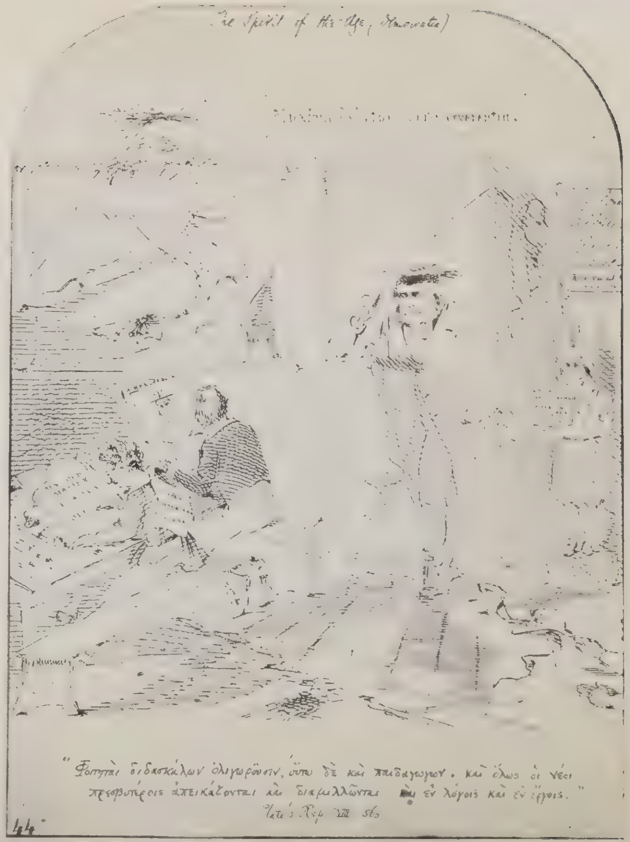

I'VE A VOTE, I'M A MAN
I'VE A VOTE, I'M AN ARTISAN
Only an Owl could read
"Reform". Bursting of the death barrelled 6 (or 7) pounder

AN OXFORD HARLEQUINADE.

From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O.


Et Fabrum summâ genus haesit ulmo.
Nota quae sedes fuerat columbis
Et superjecto pavidae natarunt
aequore dammae

THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY UP A TREE.


The Spirit of the Age (Democratic)
"Φοιτηταὶ διδασκάλων ὀλιγωροῦσιν, οὕτω δὲ καὶ παιδαγωγῶν. καὶ ὅλως οἱ νέοι πρεσβυτέροις ἀπεικάζονται καὶ διαμιλλῶνται ἐν λόγοις καὶ ἐν ἔργοις."
Plato's Rep VIII 563
44

JOURNALISTIC SYMPTOMS: ANOTHER ALARM FOR THE UNIVERSITY.

From the Cartoons by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O.

publicity were made, with varying success. Thus *The Oxford Undergraduates' Journal* was started, to be amalgamated, two years after initiation, with a similar paper from Cambridge—an arrangement which held good till 1885, when the University staff passed over to *The Oxford Magazine*, first published in 1883. Though *The Harlequin* of 1866 proved ephemeral, its ambition was worthy of attention, and Mr. Hall delineated to a nicety the attitude of the University towards such productions.

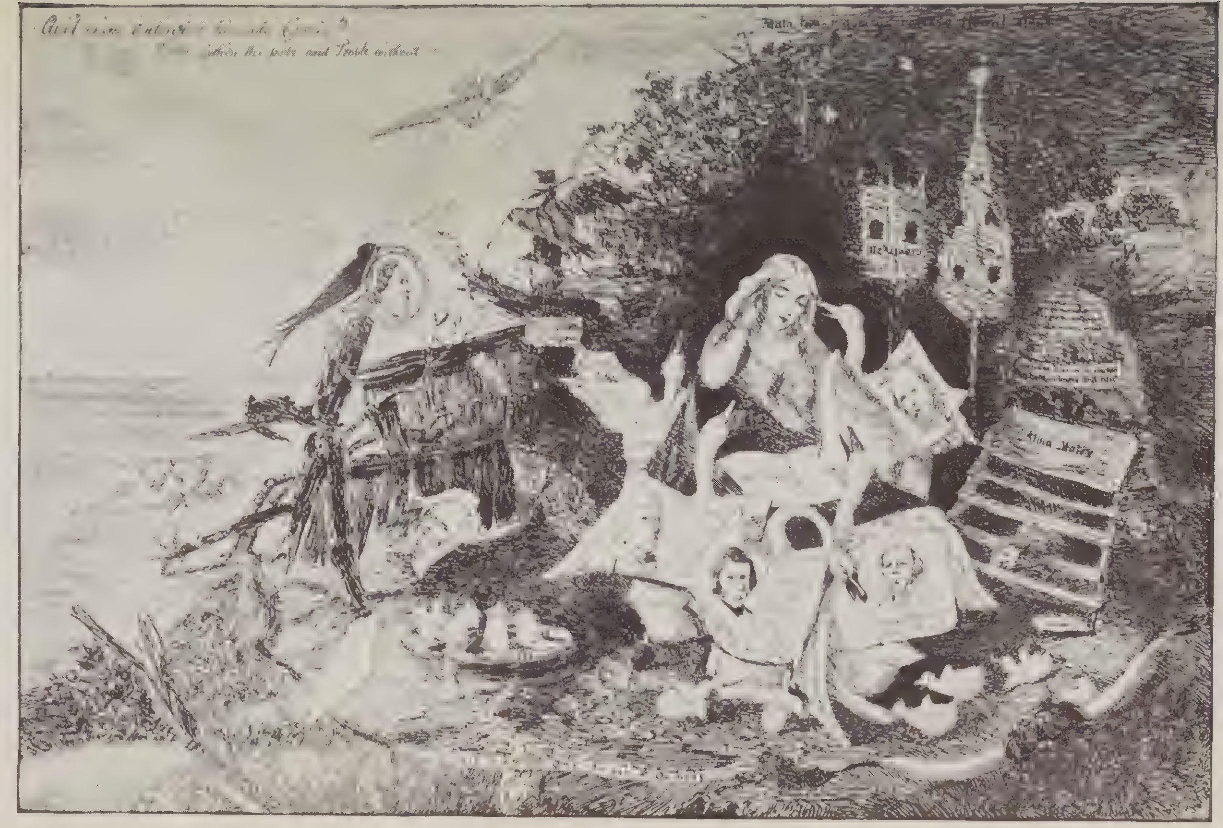
> "*Credebant hoc grande nefas et morte piandum*
> *Si juvenis vetulo non assurrexerat et si*
> *Barbato cuicumque puer.*"

As an indication of the fate in store for the producers of such comic ebullience as this promised to be, and as a protest against its interpretations of things political, the Vice-Chancellor [Dr. Lightfoot] is seen in one drawing as a schoolmaster, "entering a room in which some young gentlemen are amusing themselves in rather a significant manner." In a companion-picture the same project is treated, from another point of view, with genial mockery. It expresses the way in which political subjects would be likely to appear in *The Harlequin*. Here is the pantomime of *Jack in the Box* at His Majesty's Theatre, and Jack is the emancipated artisan, who, though "out of office," is also out of the box, so that he dominates the scene. That tribute paid to coming power, the discomfiture of prominent statesmen is portrayed on one side of the stage, and the triumph of Harlequin on the other, "with *Fun* consumed to a cinder, *The Owl* reduced to reading itself, Mark Lemon squeezed dry, and even *Punch* become a potsherd!"

Higher ranges of literature attracted this cunning and impartial observer of Oxford's whimsies and vagaries. Everything that touched such men as Ruskin or Swinburne had its echo in the Union. However far inappreciation might go, poetic and artistic movements of every kind were watched. The picture which gives us Swinburne, though not a Swinburne *in propria persona*, belongs to an earlier chapter of this book. The critical content of the picture is not above the suspicion of prejudice, and the inscription—"*Drawn and Written by D. G. Rossetti*"—should be prefaced by the words "*supposed to be.*" The portrait of Swinburne is pleasing, for the artist did not choose to indulge in the distortions of caricature, but he has succeeded in conveying, in concentrated form, the charges of corruption which certain ages, especially in England, have chosen to bring against human lapses from standards of morality; charges which few individuals of any age have been able to sustain without betraying either ignorance or hypocrisy. Victorianism, perhaps, was specially prone to weakness in these matters, which seems a pity; yet it is a gain to have something before us indicative of the trend of the times and illustrative of its hatred of realism in poetry.

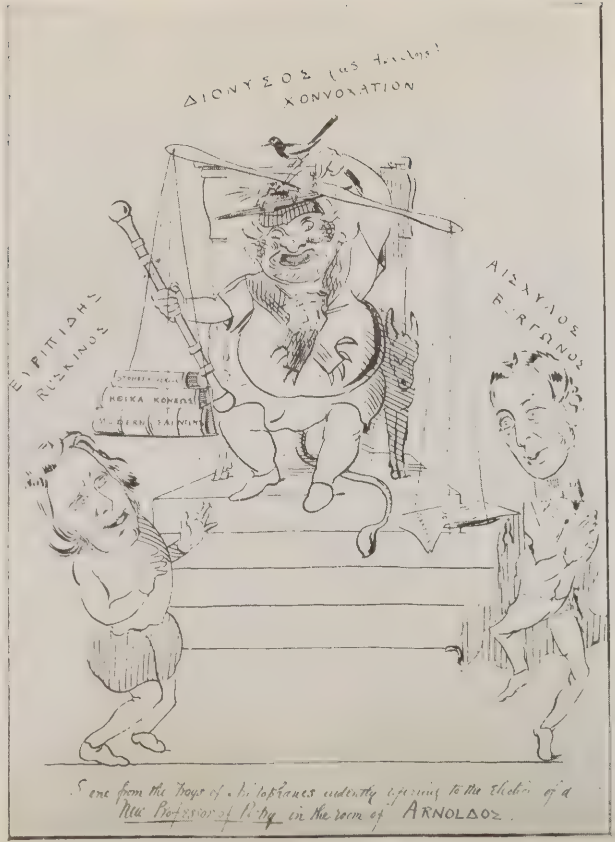
In a sense, the Union existed largely to record the verdicts of majorities. If Swinburne had a following, it was that of the faithful few. Beauty of rhythm and magic of style were not the only passports to their favour and devotion. They believed in freedom of utterance. As for comparisons with other writers, these were not merely odious, they were unnecessary. But society as a whole had to indulge every now and then in the pastime of discouraging or killing the poets. Swinburne's was simply a recurrent case. To us, the representation is that of the pillories of the past, in which accuser and victim change places as the onlookers' expressions turn from frowns to smiles. The poets cannot be killed. This is not an official view. It would be difficult to get anything of that kind out of Swinburne's "Dolores."

Oxford, of course, had an official eye for poetry, too. The professorship of Poetry could even be held by a poet, and there was much searching of hearts when Matthew Arnold's

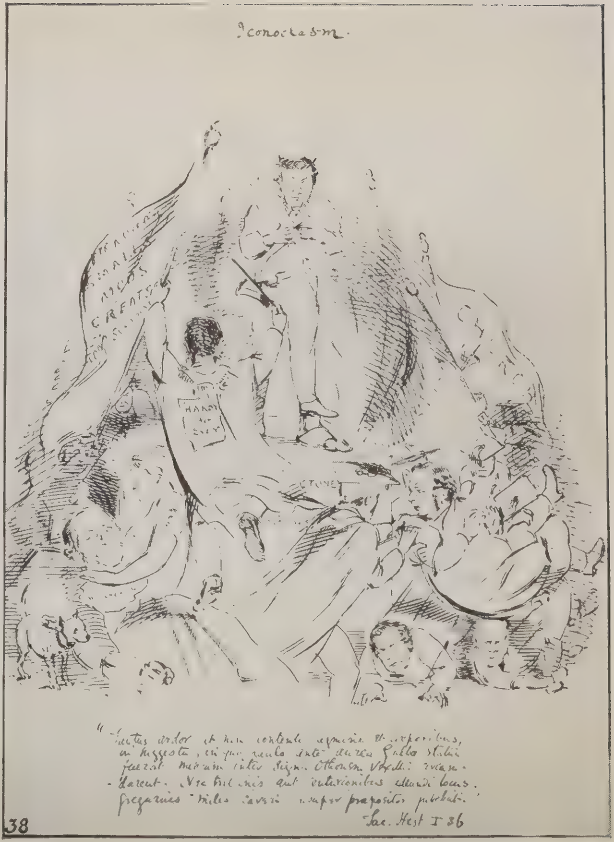


POETRY AT OXFORD IN 1867.

From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O


ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ (us Tackys!
ΧΟΝΥΟΧΑΤΙΟΝ
ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ
RUSKINOΣ
ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ
ΒΥΡΓΩΝΟΣ
STONES OF VENICE
ΗΘΙΚΑ ΚΟΝΕΩΣ
MODERN PAINTERS
Scene from the Frogs of Aristophanes evidently referring to the Election of a New Professor of Poetry in the room of ΑRNOLΔΟΣ.

RUSKIN *VERSUS* BURGON.


Iconoclasm.
CREATS
HARDY
STONE
38
"Certus ardor et non contenti agmine et corporibus, in suggestu, in quo paulo ante aurea Galbae statua fuerat, medium inter signa Othonem vexillis circumdarent. Nec tribunis aut centurionibus adeundi locus. Gregarius miles caveri insuper praepositos jubebat."
Tac. Hist I 36

HARDY *VERSUS* GLADSTONE.

TWO CONTESTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO THE UNION.

From the Cartoons by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O.

tenure of the office came to an end. There are those who deny the title of poet to Arnold even now, though he has gained ground enormously. While Oxford loved him, there were doubts on this head, doubts dissipated in due course, if only by "Thyrsis" and the "Scholar Gipsy," but before anyone could succeed him as professor a good many different men and qualifications had to be considered.

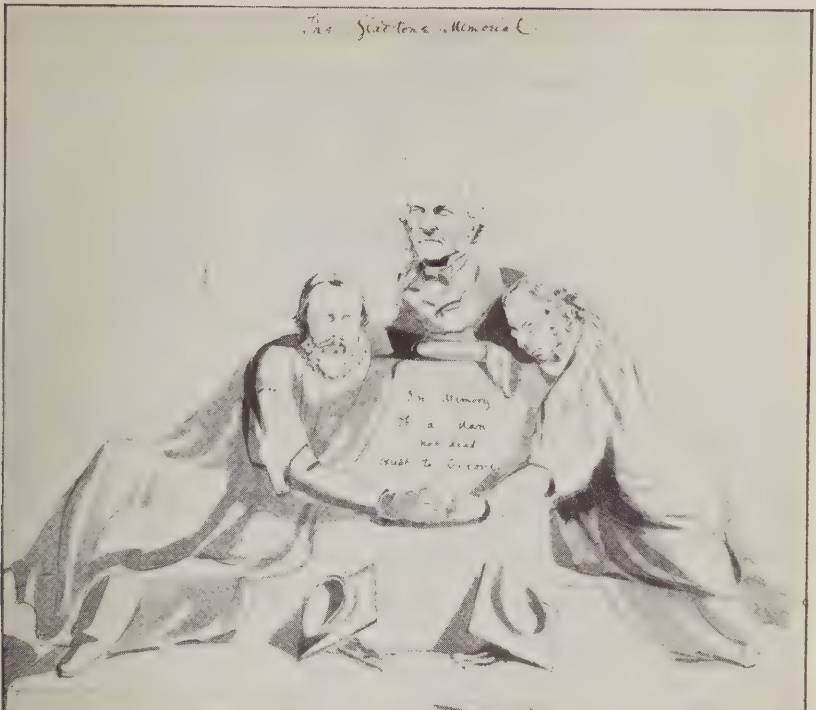
Into the controversy which arose the name of Robert Browning was brought. A little later, and Oxford showed itself only too glad to give the honorary degree; Balliol also, to bestow the honorary fellowship which identified the poet with the University for the rest of his life; but when the professorial vacancy occurred Browning lacked the statutory qualification. The professorial appointment went to Sir Francis Hastings Doyle.

The cartoon designed by Mr. Hall at this juncture displays a great variety of emotions. A number of poets of very different types is represented amidst considerable hissing and cackling on the part of as many birds. Here the geese are but dimly differentiated from the swans, while Alma Mater frets and fusses over her brood of fledgelings. These, cooped up as she is, she cannot even reach. Ruskin, Doyle, Kynaston, and Young are shown as poets "within the pale": without it are mere "people" like Robert Browning and the poet Close; but Browning's reputation has been brought by birds from over the sea, even from Italy, and Close is seen as a scarecrow. Thus Browning's exclusion from the professorship by a technicality is cleverly indicated and reproved. Besides, Professor Westwood had been appointed without the formal qualification, and so the arraignment is complete.

Obviously, the Oxford here depicted could hardly see the wood for the trees. The further influences of obscurantism in matters poetic are indicated by the basis of an ox-hide for the whole of the scene, and again by the emergence out of the shadows of church and conventicle, as though these were shadows of confusion in themselves. A mingling of metaphors and an excessive allusiveness are perhaps drawbacks to swift grasp of the meaning, but the whole is well imagined and beautifully drawn. The other poetic cartoon confines itself to the same contest in a narrower aspect, showing Ruskin against Burgon in a spirited imitation of the "Frogs" of Aristophanes.

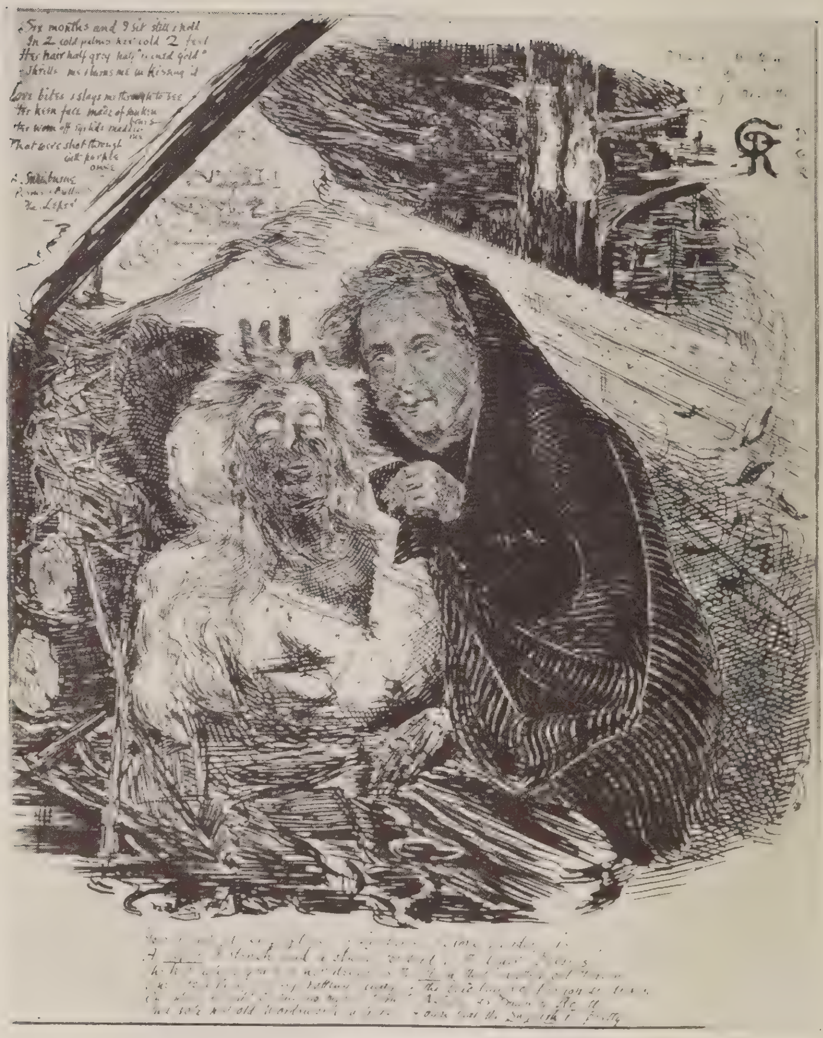
Of these various figures, Doyle, Burgon, and Ruskin had long been, each in his own way, ardent supporters of the Union. Burgon's candidature for the professorship was not exactly a thing *pour rire*, for, as professors of poetry go, he had at least a normal claim to be considered. That the balance, in the picture given, inclines in his favour as Æschylus, whilst Ruskin's Euripidean weight is discounted by a sheet of paper and Burgon is engaged in buffoonery, casts a certain dubious reflection on the versatile dean. This is a reminder of the epigram coined by an Oxford man of note, Mr. Francis Gribble, of Exeter College, author of "The Romance of the Oxford Colleges." He says of Burgon that "buffoonery was his forte, and piety was his foible." Perhaps the truth is that Burgon wanted to conquer too many different worlds; and the epigram would sound as well if "piety" were altered to "poetry." But what, indeed, is a foible?

If the Union had a foible, which may be taken to be a fancy more or less peculiar, it lay in preferring politics to poetry in an academic centre which had all the intellectual achievements of all the ages as its circumference. Nevertheless when Robert Browning presented a set of his poems and plays to the Union "with his respectful regards," there was none so blind to the great adventure of the poet's work as to fail in gratitude for the gift. It need hardly be added that these volumes, with their autographed inscription, are amongst the most treasured of the society's possessions, and anyone who scans them may feel that by his act the giver made an approach in all sincerity to appreciation of the Union mind;


The Gladstone Memorial
In Memory
of a Man
not dead
31

THE "GLADSTONE MEMORIAL" OF 1868.

From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O.


Six months and I sit still & hold
In 2 cold palms her cold 2 feet
Her hair half grey half "ruined gold"
Thrills me & burns me in kissing it
Love bites & slays me through to see
Her keen face made of sunken bones
Her worn off eyelids madden me
That were shot through with purple once
A. Swinburne
Poems & Ballads
The Leper

AN UNOFFICIAL VIEW OF THE POET SWINBURNE.

From the Cartoon by Sydney P. Hall, M.V.O.

that mind which kept things open and believed that the beginning of life was very much like the opening of a worthy book.

Yet politics came first, and just in these days there were palpitations throbbing in the Oxford heart through political developments and changes. These affected, more especially, Mr. Gladstone, who still remained a Union hero with a difference, once his political connexion with Oxford was severed by Mr. Gathorne-Hardy's triumph, pictured also by Mr. Hall. Henceforward, charges were flung against the statesman with increasing zest, and his political decease was represented by Mr. Hall in a series of designs for a memorial. The year was 1868. These designs, in different styles, by supposed sculptors, are all preserved at the Union. One of them represents the grief of Thorold Rogers and Dean Mansel personally, whilst the whole series celebrates the long connexion between Mr. Gladstone, the Houses of Parliament, and the University. The sketch below the memorial is an interesting allegory for the Union. For the next thirty years Mr. Gladstone's political actions were to prove contentious in the extreme: yet the Union, when the time came for a real memorial, voted one with unanimity. And the strife of politics was hushed in admiration for a man.

CHAPTER XII

THE INTERESTS OF THE UNION, BETWEEN 1862 AND 1872, RANGE FROM PICTURES IN PICCADILLY TO PARTRIDGES IN PAPHLAGONIA: A CHAPTER OF MEMOIRS JUDICIAL, EPISCOPAL AND ACADEMIC

LORD ST. HELIER, when writing about the Union, had chosen to call himself a Philistine, but this was more in jest than in earnest, possibly a wise precaution against the danger of taking the Union and its vagaries too seriously. One part of the life, however, he did like to treat with a quiet appreciation, and thoughts on the subject flowed from his pen in handwriting so graceful that it would rejoice the heart of a graphologist.

" I owed a great deal of amusement and many friends to the Union," wrote the distinguished judge. " But I don't think that, as regards the debates, the period I knew was as brilliant as some after and before it. Those were the days when most young men at Oxford who were thought of ability were strong Liberals, rather of the Goldwin Smith type—and so I became a strong Tory in order, I am afraid, to oppose that particular faction." (Amongst the Liberals of that time were Bryce, Ilbert, Robinson of New College, and Robinson of Worcester). " Debates, of course, ranged over the whole field of politics, and I thought on the whole that the Tories did not get the worst of it. The most animated debates were on private business. The great question was that of Sunday opening, which turned to a ludicrous extent on the desirability of not employing one ancient servant on Sunday who always, through some member, used to convey his desire to be so employed if it could be considered in his wages. Imagine into how many paths of argument and eloquence this led! My own most serious exploit as treasurer was taking away the floor between two rooms and making the lofty reading-room in the old part of the building. I think I was nearly impeached for this. It was said to be contrary to all ideas of beauty to construct such a room, and unsafe besides, and that no proper professional advice had been taken. There was something in the case against me, though I always thought I made a very good room."

Certainly the treasurer who thus accomplished his object had reasons to congratulate himself on his reconstruction, and he survived another vote of censure, this time on account of his provision of a sort of vestibule of curtains to the debating-hall. No doubt he had made great improvements. However, by sundry provisions in the rules, which nearly every generation has altered in some way or another, the powers of treasurers of the Union, in matters of building, have been considerably curtailed. These matters are of more than passing importance, simply because, in the present day, there is a strong feeling against destruction or alteration of buildings which preserve a tradition or even a style. In Cornmarket Street, hard by the Union, old and quaint buildings are being pulled down as these lines are being written, to make room for larger shops and banks. Great is the outcry, and the Oxford Architectural and Historical Societies are implored to intervene. This is sufficient reason for noting that there may be in some part of the Union building an architectural feature worth preserving. Associations, at any rate, have some value; but of course it is difficult for contemporaries to appraise what they have grown up with, and it would surprise many people to be told that anything built as recently as 1857 might already be in the running for the higher appreciation of men. A good part of the building with which Jeune of Balliol and his friends were familiar disappeared in the improvements of

1910; the lofty room which he made still remains, though this has several times been reconstructed and re-embellished, and later additions are on quite a handsome scale. Even so, it is the Woodward nucleus which still constitutes the main body of the Union buildings; and perhaps there are those in Oxford who may care to keep an eye on them, lest they should be threatened or improved out of existence.

It is time to consider other names. The Right Honourable Christopher Redington, an Irish privy councillor, was one of the men who helped to steer the Union through the time between 1865 and 1870. He remembered the Pre-Raphaelite discussions and wondered a little at the enthusiasm of the art critics who were so greatly concerned over the frescoes. His recollections of a period which saw him first treasurer and then President throw some light on a system of election which has now become a thing of the past. That system had brought a good many men forward with excellent results. It had been responsible, before Redington's time, for the election to the terminal office of President of men like Auberon Herbert of St. John's, who resigned his post at the fifth meeting of term. This was quite an original thing to do, and, whether there were adequate reason for it or not, it was as an original and as an independent that the Honourable Auberon went through life, an apostle of individualism who carried his methods of reasoning into his daily habits, like Thoreau or Tolstoy. Tancock of Exeter and Bosworth Smith of Corpus were two others who made their mark, and they were helped by James Magrath and Edward Moore, both of Queen's. Dr. Moore lived to become Principal of St. Edmund Hall, and to render great services to Italian literature, especially to Dante; whilst Dr. Magrath has presided for many years over his college and is still in 1923 its venerated head. The names of H. L. Harrison of Christ Church, who received a knighthood for his services in Bengal, and of A. A. Clive of Lincoln, must also be mentioned as adding in these years to the credit of the society.

Mr. Redington has left behind him some interesting details concerning the procedure in elections and other matters. He wrote a good many years after he had been active at the Union, but he liked to watch the proceedings, and he deprecated, as many others have done, the excessive number of visitors as speakers. These, from time to time, tended to obscure both the objects and the legitimate task of the society. Of his own day, he reinforced the statement made often enough by others in different forms, that the debates had a strong religious tinge.

"The subjects that drew best," said Mr. Redington, "were on such topics as 'The Establishment of Monasticism in the Church of England,' on which I remember an eloquent speech by Addis of Balliol, then a High Churchman, and Shee of Christ Church, a Roman Catholic, later Recorder of Salford. In private business the frescoes were a continuous 'draw,' and there were many discussions before a smoking-room was established.

"I was elected President after a contest, but the contests were not entirely political. A man who took an interest in the Union, however much one differed from him politically, would get general support. I think in 1869 I proposed Reginald Copleston (Bishop of Calcutta), with whom I certainly was not in political agreement. On the whole, the Union of my day, from 1865 onwards, was a very useful part of University life,—not frequented of course by the mere spendthrifts and rowdies, nor by the mere students, but a centre for men of varied gifts and tastes, where the debates were often vigorously carried on, and the talents of many men of subsequent distinction were first brought to light. There were, of course, bores, and ambitious failures and buffoons, but there were often most interesting and eloquent speeches. Of course the audience was critical and often very much given to interruption, but a man who spoke sense and had no affectation got a fair hearing."

The introduction of Queen's, or "The Queen's College," as members of that royal foundation love to call it, coupled with the re-assertion of the religious motive, on which so many writers about the Union insist, is a reminder that Queen's possessed in these days a first-class debating society of its own, and that the members of it liked to consider themselves as preparing for the larger field of the Union. Into this society members of other colleges were occasionally admitted, among whom was Frederic Arnold of Christ Church, who on one occasion made a speech at the Union which set everybody talking. The subject was Church Patronage. Arnold gave quite a thrilling account of abuses prevalent. He castigated clerical wirepullers, sacerdotal wastrels, greedy sinecurists, and made quite a sensation when he dealt with certain Lord Chancellors of the recent past. He carried, quite easily, his censures of the system in vogue; and as the clerically-minded were a large percentage of the society, he came to be regarded as a man with a future. Though a first-class man, Arnold drifted through the by-ways of the clerical life and left no particular mark; but to the day of his death men who had known him would talk of his prowess at the Union.

Church reform, of course, may well be regarded in the present day as having still a long way to go. There are indications, too, in the Union of later date that secularism might come to be regarded as the normal attitude of a society debarred from theology. For all that, it took a long time before the Union lost its partiality for debates involving the Church of England and those who served her. Out of the Oxford Movement itself great zeal for work had sprung. If the presidential page be scanned for this decade it will be seen that about half of the occupants of the chair took holy orders. The three Presidents for 1868 all became bishops—Reginald Copleston, Edward Talbot, and Mandell Creighton. And the connecting-link of after-life, in all these cases, was a superabundant energy. The labours of the English episcopate were altogether too heavy for Bishop Creighton. But such labours are an indication of efficiency; the men who chose this path certainly believed, at the time they chose it, that Oxford would go with them all the way. Oxford has at least gone with them in sympathy, and it is fitting that one of the survivors of the three Presidents of 1868, who can look back on a busy life spent in pastoral work of different kinds, as vicar of a parish, as warden of a college, as bishop of more than one diocese, should have looked back on his Union days with favour and should now enable others to look back on them with him. The Union, in its centenary year, may indeed regard with special satisfaction the name of Edward Stuart Talbot, from 1911 to 1923 Bishop of Winchester. Bishop Talbot writes:—

"My recollections of the Oxford Union are not at all full, but some of them are vivid.

"In my time, from 1863–8, it was flourishing; though of course some said that it was not what it had been, and we ourselves looked back to 'giants in those days.' Such an one especially was Albert Dicey, whom I only heard speak once at an extraordinary meeting on the subject of the Lancashire Cotton Famine. Bryce and Bowen had also been among the great men of the past.

"But I remember in my own time a committee which included Ilbert (Sir Courtenay), Alfred Robinson, Archer Clive, and Richard Robinson, and this was certainly not a bad representation in a small body, for each had his characteristic ability. Clive was perhaps the keenest of all. His mind flashed like his eye, and none was more lovable. To Alfred Robinson we all looked as our strong, clear-eyed statesman, a character which Oxford residents will well remember that he realized, to the gain of his University and college in later years. He had an extraordinary influence of that sort among us. Richard Robinson was the eager, smiting Radical, always attacking, always denouncing; in our debates, in which he spoke continually, availing himself of the resources of an all-devouring reading and an all-retaining memory. Ilbert's lucid, accomplished ability would have made us all sure that he would take a place among the strongest men of his time.

" While speaking of the committee, I may say that there was a certain mixture of an oligarchical element in the democracy of the Union. There was perhaps a slight tendency to keep the Presidential Chair in one (very wide) intellectual set. And men of high academical reputation got rather more position at the Union than what they did there justified The methods of election were not democratic. The President nominated his committee. He himself at that time was generally nominated without a contest, though exceptions were probably frequent, by his predecessor. Sometimes it would happen that a man took a very active and constant part in the debates, but was not welcomed into its official circles. I have in mind one man from Queen's, who constantly, in my earlier time, led the Conservative force in debate. But though our leaders were generally Liberal, there was of course no party government.

" Among the names of the time I recall Strachan-Davidson of Balliol as a constant speaker, wise and weighty and already learned; Sir Walter Phillimore and (Bishop) Edgar Jacob, men of fluent and ready speech; the two brothers Simcox, the younger reputed the ablest man of his time, if health had allowed him freedom to show it, but not gifted with voice or powers as a speaker. The elder brother was a characteristic feature of the Union. To hear him in private or public business bring out in his own peculiar way epigrams and oracles, which we only half understood, but over which we delighted to laugh with himself, would at any moment draw a house in from the other rooms. Christ Church, to which I belonged, did not generally favour the Union much. It was to the credit of Lord Percy that he led one of the good 'sets' in the house to take up the Union seriously.

"I do not recall many special scenes. I almost think it was my first experience of the Union when Babington of New College moved to the effect that 'the best hopes of Society lay in a return to Barbarism.' It was reported at the time that the proposer, then a junior member, had not understood that anyone dropping a motion into the suggestion box was expected to move it if adopted by the committee. It was this, perhaps, along with the paradox of the subject, and the effort which the proposer had to make to fill the room with rather a weak and high-pitched voice, which drew a crowded house that night. A debate on the revival of monasticism had the unique success, I think, of being twice adjourned. It brought to the front, appropriately, Mr. Stuckey Coles, later head of the Pusey House. In private business (which was, of course, always the most amusing part) I was myself at one time embarked with others in an indictment of a rather prominent member for the offence of adding a number of names with his own hand to the board on which members who desired a poll on a given question or election were asked to sign. The offence was probably merely thoughtlessness, but it was obviously a dangerous precedent. Anyhow we were officially and righteously indignant. But the chief interest of the matter in recollection is that it brought forward, in characteristic chivalry towards an unpopular side, and as he thought a mistaken cause, one whom I do not otherwise remember at the Union, Sanday of Trinity.

"Ireland was even then with us, as I am reminded by recalling a really burning piece of oratory by an old Christ Church contemporary, Shee (a son of the judge), then occupying the secretary's chair, and stung, while discharging its humble labours, by some example of British stolidity or injustice towards his country.

"I ought to have mentioned above Jeune of Pembroke (Lord St. Helier), who spoke very steadily and effectively for some time as the protagonist of the more numerous but less speech-ful party; showing and training the future advocate's power of stating a case.

"I remember its being said that the first instance of anything like regular canvassing, political fashion, in an election, was set by (Sir Ellis) Ashmead-Bartlett of Christ Church.

"Let me give a word to a very familiar and much-respected figure, that of Harris, the steward: always in his little room, always at work, always ready to talk; courteous to the President and the freshman. Some who have since become permanent officials under Government must have remembered in Harris their first known typical permanent official doing all the work which appeared under others' names, tolerating by an admirable courtesy us presidents and treasurers who filed past him, a troop of shadows in terminal rotation, whilst disguising his consciousness (and ours) that the substance of the work, and all the knowledge of it, was his and not ours. Under him, little Buckingham, the attendant and caretaker, hardly rose in outer man to the standard of the great name he bore.

"Personally I owe the Union a great debt; it was a real bit of education, and it brought men of different colleges together in a way which to a house-man particularly was very valuable."

So far Bishop Talbot. With reference to the commotion which arose over the poll, and, more generally, in view of the private business, which had such excitement and importance, it is right to add a comment. As in later days, feeling ran high over things that may now be regarded as trifles, but only if the whole society was really a trifling affair altogether; on which question, in these pages, it is happily possible to be quite as impartial as about everything else. But it is said that "the boy is father of the man," and it is pleasant indeed to know that in affairs which caused high words and even led to the disruption of friendships, thus endangering the society, the force of character told. It was the kind of force which led the counsels of moderation yet could preserve a certain dignity and speak out forcibly about conduct, if occasion demanded : the force which swayed a new college, Keble, for many years, without the college knowing how it was swayed : the force which flowed on through Leeds and Rochester and Southwark and Winchester, and will not be forgotten. The eminent bishop's words are a reminder, too, that Union debates were still unreported. Yet private business rather unfortunately leaked into print, and always to the doubtful profit of the Union. Such pamphlets as were issued did not always counsel moderation. In one of these, twelve pages of close print hardly suffice for the indignation of one critic. But in between the lines can be read a testimonial to the committee, which was attacked. To the quixotic exponent of pure generosity, Sanday, later the well-known professor and writer, another testimony was less ambiguously given in this production. The trouble seems to have been sabbatarian in its origin and it is well over now.

The compliment paid by the bishop to Harris, the steward, was thoroughly well deserved, but the Union has grown out of all knowledge since those days, and administration of its many interests has often been a difficult matter, involving complexities which the worthy Harris never had to consider. These are the penalties attached to youth which will persist in growing amidst venerable surroundings. But on one side at any rate administration was a matter beyond Harris altogether. This was the library. Just here the temptation comes to dovetail into this account the words of a very eminent man. A letter from Bishop Creighton throws a little light on systems of election ; on his own ideas of how to be a president ; and on the library of the Union as well.

" Never," says the famous ecclesiastic who took so many posts, congenial or uncongenial, from a sense of duty, though he drew the line at " consecrating hassocks," " did I interest myself in the debates, as I never felt that any good came of talking for its own sake. My work at the Union was solely administrative. I became a member of the library committee. I did what I could in that capacity, and was afterwards librarian. I was asked to qualify for the office of President by making a speech, which I did at the end of some debate. I fear that I was a very bad President, as I rarely sat through the debates, but only conducted the private business. I worked for some years at a new catalogue for the library. At first we contemplated a revision of the subject-catalogue, but gave it up as impossible. How well I remember an entry in the old catalogue of Calderon's '*Life's a Dream.*' It was put down under *Biography!* " I afterwards served on the building committee. But all that I did was administrative. The most valuable helper in making the new catalogue was Professor York Powell. The amount of work done by these two committees was very large, and certainly instructive to those who took part in it."

This is a characteristic letter. It throws light on the Union. But it does more than that. It throws light on the character of Mandell Creighton, who was really a great man. London did not know much about him when he became Bishop of London. He was just the same man as he had been at Oxford : he " never felt any good came of talking for talking's sake." Let the Union of the twentieth century (and after) take this caution to heart, and remember, at the same time, that one man who spent years over its catalogues and worked hard at its administration : who would not take the trouble to sit through its debates when President, because he thought they were not worth it : a man who never cared twopence for politics, yet gave his own service to any party, or any partisan, that seemed to serve the community : let the Union remember that this man became the greatest power of his day in London, because of his gifts of thought and speech. He tried, as those who visit St. Paul's Cathedral know, "to write true history." He lived beloved, and he died lamented. The journalists of his time never thought their columns of gossip and information complete without the latest saying of the Bishop of London. He was killed by the oppression of unnecessary work, but all the same he did a great deal that was necessary. He left a legacy to the Union of a belief in the usefulness of books; and there is no name more noble on the Union's roll.

The story of this time is taken up with great kindness by the present President (1923) of St. John's College, Dr. Herbert Armitage James, whose services to the country as head-master of Rossall, Cheltenham and Rugby successively, in addition to many other achievements in public fields, are widely known and gratefully appreciated.

In a paper read before the St. John's Essay Society, Dr. James has written :—

"In recording my recollections of the Oxford Union, I am giving impressions of an Oxford which has, since the period 1863–1873, undergone great changes. I speak of an Oxford which knew no Keble College, no Hertford College (it was Magdalen Hall), and of a time when the Parks had barely emerged from a stretch of green fields: when, if you went for a walk on a Sunday afternoon—and in those days golf and lawn-tennis were unknown, and no one dreamed of boating on Sunday—you had to wear a tall hat; when if you went into hall in a light coat you were promptly sconced; when no one but a crank walked out bare-headed; when hockey and football matches had not begun; when there were no unattached students, no Rhodes scholars, and naturally no baseball; when at one college at least all undergraduates were expected to attend the University sermon on Sunday morning and to produce notes of their presence at it.

" The Union buildings were far more primitive than now; there was no such thing as afternoon-tea to be had on the premises, for indeed afternoon-tea did not exist as an institution. We held debate in what is now the Library, the Presidential Chair being at the east end of the room. Not less simple were the arrangements for debate: the subject and proposer were, of course, announced some days beforehand, but all other speakers for or against the motion had to take their chance of catching the President's eye. Only those who remained to the close of the debate were allowed to vote, so that the records of the time give the impression of a much scantier attendance than was actually the case. Moreover, it was rarely indeed that any contest for the presidency or (if my memory does not betray me) for the minor offices took place. The outgoing President nominated his successor, and, in the seven or eight years for which I knew the Union best, I can now recall only two contests for the presidency, though there may have been one or two others—not more, I am sure.

" It was only when it seemed that some obvious person was being overlooked, or when an unpopular candidate was proposed, that the nomination was challenged. When this was the case, the election turned a good deal upon party politics. The Union was predominantly Conservative, but the President was not always of that type. Indeed, in one case of a contested election a Conservative leader was turned down. This was Campbell Mackinnon of Queen's, a very fluent and ready speaker, for whom, however, his party could hardly claim any conspicuous reasoning (argumentative) ability. I remember that in an account of a debate in which he took part the description occurred, written very likely by Dr. Merry:—'Then there arose an eyeglass, with a man at a convenient distance behind it.' Another presidential contest was between Lord Francis Hervy, and my great friend W. B. Duggan of Lincoln. Lord Francis was a scholar of Balliol, and a candidate of such standing was too great guns for his opponent, though the latter was in my opinion by far the better, abler, and more frequent speaker.

" Let me describe the personnel of the Union of those days. It has been deeply interesting to an old man like myself to watch the careers of the then principal speakers. Among these were Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester ; Lyulph Stanley, afterwards Lord Stanley of Alderley, and now Lord Sheffield ; Talbot, Bishop of Winchester ; Jeune, afterwards Lord St. Helier, and a great ecclesiastical lawyer ; Phillimore, now Lord Phillimore, and a well-known judge ; Copleston, Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India ; Mylne, Bishop of Bombay ; Awdry, Bishop of South Tokyo ; Jacob, Bishop of St. Albans ; Creighton, Bishop of London ; Sanday, so well known as a theologian and professor ; Fearon, head-master of Winchester ; Strachan-Davidson, the late Master of Balliol ; Spooner, Warden of New College ; the present Earl of Iddesleigh, then Northcote of Balliol ; E. Robertson, afterwards Lord Lochee ; Lord Warkworth, afterwards Earl Percy and Duke of Northumberland ; Ilbert (Sir Courtenay Ilbert of the Ilbert Bill) ; Redington, afterwards an Irish Privy Councillor ; Lock, the late head of Keble and present Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity ; and at the end of my time came Asquith, who showed even then much promise of his later oratorical power. Three more among Presidents passed away before their prime, Alfred Robinson, fellow and bursar of New College, who did a great work in his college and is commemorated there by the tower which bears his name ; Richard Robinson, scholar of Worcester and fellow of Queen's, who passed away quite young ; and a scholar of St. John's, H. M. R. Pope, who died of overwork, professional, intellectual, and philanthropic, on the threshold of a most promising career as a barrister.

" If you ask me which of these was the greatest orator, I think I should single out, for absolute eloquence, Lyulph

Stanley, one of whose speeches on the American Civil War, in which he took, strongly and fearlessly, the unpopular side and had to face a hostile house, was one of the best, as I think it was the first, I ever heard at the Union; then I should mention Richard Robinson, whose passionate Radicalism gave his eloquence a somewhat vituperative tinge—I remember the scorn with which he twitted his opponents of the Union (who were just then without any distinguished advocates) with being a 'dumb and serried' crew; and lastly, W. B. Duggan, afterwards Vicar of St. Paul's Church, Oxford, whose speech on George Eliot still lingers in my memory. These were of real eloquence and fire; but others, such as Talbot, Alfred Robinson, Copleston, Strachan-Davidson, Asquith, were speakers, admirable indeed, but of a more restrained type. It must be remembered that in those days we never called up ministers and M.P.s to address the house.

"I think I ought not to leave unrecorded my recollection of the two chief humorists of the Union of that day. They both came from the same northern school, and both, alas! died comparatively young. It is not easy to recall their best efforts to amuse the house. One of them, I remember, in criticizing a minister who had either changed his political colour or been transferred to a new office, compared him to an American quack doctor to whom a child was brought suffering from an obscure complaint. The doctor was at last compelled to acknowledge that he was beaten; 'but, he added, 'I'll give him a pill that will produce convulsions, and I'm a whale at convulsions!' The other wit got up to speak in a debate on Pre-Raphaelitism. 'When I saw,' he said, 'the subject announced for debate, as I knew nothing whatever about it, I searched all the dictionaries in the library for some notice of the great Pre-Raphael himself, but (would you believe it, sir?) without success. However, I was informed that if I went to a certain gallery in London, I should see a specimen of this form of art. Sir, I went; I edged my way through a reeking crowd, and found myself face to face with a most disreputable-looking goat.' The picture, of course, was Holman Hunt's 'Scapegoat.'

"It will be seen, from some of the allusions I have made to the subjects of debate, that they included questions on literature and art which seem never to have a place in the Union debates of to-day. And I want to say, with all the emphasis I can command, that I think this a grave mistake and loss. Such debates in my time were some of the best I can remember. And to give them a turn once and again—even if only once in a term—is to relieve the deadly monotony of everlasting politics, and also to give a chance to an entirely new class of speakers. And surely it should not be forgotten how the most historic debate in the whole annals of the Union was the famous one, in its earliest days, 1829, when Cambridge sent a sort of mission of its best speakers to teach Oxford to honour her own poet Shelley. The motion was that Shelley was a greater poet than Byron. I do commend the idea of a revival of such debates to the consideration of the Union officials of to-day. I find that in 1866 a resolution was passed at the Union to the effect that even then a more frequent discussion of literary and historical subjects would be advantageous to the public debates of the Union, although these subjects were by no means banned then as they seem to be now.

"Of course the favourite subjects of debate were the political and social problems of the day—the ballot, the game laws, the relations of Church and State, reforms of the franchise and in the University, the retention of our colonies (which was opposed by many Liberal politicians at that time), the eternal question of Ireland; and so on. But amongst other subjects debated were spirit-rapping and clairvoyance; the abolition of oaths in courts of justice; capital punishment (debated three times between 1863 and 1873); the reform of the public schools; 'that this House regrets the tendency to sacrifice classics to philosophy in the Final Schools'; 'that the Government systematically sacrifices the honour and interests of Englishmen to truckle to the American cabinet,' which apparently meant its unwillingness to intervene in the American Civil War; the temperance movement; the restoration of the monastic orders (twice debated but each time rejected, though on neither occasion by a large majority); the repeal of the law of primogeniture; the poetry of Tennyson and the novels of George Eliot; the question (a very hotly disputed one) whether or not it was for the good of Oxford that the Great Western Railway should set up works—this was pronounced unadvisable by 85 votes to 9, in spite of an amendment proposing to congratulate the University on the introduction of a spirit of industry into Oxford; 'the disgraceful way in which Parliamentary elections are conducted,' and its bearing on the desirability of extending the franchise.

"Then we debated such motions as the following:— 'That the habitual use of strong terms is unworthy of an educated Englishman.' 'That its time-serving policy and falsification of facts makes the *Times* unworthy of its position as the leading English newspaper.' 'That horse-racing as at present carried on is unworthy of the support of Englishmen' (carried by 60 votes to 10).' 'That the disadvantages of novel-reading on the whole overbalance its advantages.' 'That the system of proctorial supervision is antiquated and irrational.' I shall have to say something further about this motion; but I may note here that it was unmarked by any personalities. 'That the importance attached to athletic sports tends to moral and intellectual degradation.' 'That this House deprecates the admission of women to any political rights whatever,' to which, in a rider, the saving words 'at present' were added.

"A few incidents, grave or gay, may be worth recording. There was the great fresco question; a little before I came up, William Morris and Burne-Jones, who were up at Exeter at the time, had decorated the upper walls of what is now the library with frescoes or paintings, the subjects of which were drawn from the Arthurian legend. The colours, however, began to fade, and the artists were implored to take steps to preserve them. One of them—or was it, possibly, Rossetti ?—had no enthusiasm for the task, but at last consented to do what he could. At this most unsuitable juncture, a man named Purcell issued a pamphlet containing a severe criticism of the paintings. The restorer heard of it, and at once threw up the job.

" *A propos* the decorations of the Union, I remember a man with an impulsive manner and the voice of a tragedian putting to the treasurer in private business the question :—'Sir, can you inform me whether it is true, as I have heard, that the decorations of this house have been begun and are to be completed by an Oxford tradesman of the name of Buggins ? ' An amusing incident arose through the forgetfulness of a certain President—afterwards a bishop. He neglected to put up a notice (possibly a nomination to an office at the Union) which to be valid had to appear on the notice-board before a certain day. Very late, indeed near midnight on the previous day, he remembered what he ought to have done, and rushed off to the Union in the hope of remedying the defect before the premises were locked up for the night. On his arrival, alas ! all was dark, and the servants had left the building. At last he found a window unfastened, and somehow he managed to let himself in and affix his notice to the walls or board. But the secret was not kept, or the enemy had been too watchful, and there were considerable and rather angry discussions. Whether the validity of the proceeding was allowed or not I cannot now remember.

" The next incident that occurs to me as worth recording is intimately connected with St. John's. One of its undergraduates, who was known as a highly eccentric individual, of some literary power and humour, made a bet with a friend who was a scholar of the college that if the latter would write him a speech for a debate at the Union he would undertake to deliver it. (I imagine that it was stipulated that it should not be of such a character as to call down the veto of the President of the Union.) The day came, and the whole college went down to hear the oration. I forget what the subject of the debate was, but the speech began with the words :—'Sir, Strabo tells us that the partridge of Paphlagonia has two hearts.'—I tell the story as I heard it ; but the quotation comes, as the learned senior tutor of St. John's has discovered, not from Strabo, but from Aelian.—The speech was delivered and the bet was won.

"The last of these anecdotes shall be one which refers to a time before I came up. My dear old tutor, the late Dr. Merry, Rector of Lincoln, whose edition of Aristophanes, I doubt not, is still in use in the university, was at the time a scholar of Balliol, and then as always well known for a rather trenchant, if quite genial, humour. He and three Balliol friends made up a sort of sweepstakes ; each was to invite to a breakfast the greatest 'bloke' he knew : and after it was over, they were to vote as to which came out first in order of 'blokedom.' Merry set to work on this wise : during the Eights he repaired to the Union and sat down to watch the few who at such a time came into the room where the weekly journals were on the table. To him entered a solemn and sedate individual who took up and read a narrow and somewhat vituperative periodical representing a certain school of theology. When he left, after a prolonged perusal, Merry followed him to his rooms at one of the Halls ; introduced himself, and invited him to a breakfast where, he said, he would meet some congenial spirits who had heard of him as a serious-minded student. The invitation was accepted, and Merry's man won the 'Bloke-Breakfast-Stakes' hands down.

"But enough of frivolity pure and simple. I will now say a word or two about my own presidency, if I shall not be thought too egotistic in doing so. It was unique, I think, in one respect: I had taken my M.A. degree before I became President. The fact was that I never spoke at the Union until after I had taken my B.A. I had come up to Oxford from a country grammar-school, with little more knowledge of classics than an ordinary fourth-form boy from a public school, and nothing but a grim determination to get a first in Mods. could have saved me from disaster. Anyhow, I had no time to prepare speeches until the long ordeal of University examinations was over. I spoke a few times between 1868 and 1870: but one day, early in 1871, Mr. Grose of Queen's, then President of the Union, afterwards Registrar of the University, asked me if he might nominate me as his successor.

" The request was as unexpected as it was welcome, and I was elected without opposition. But I did not find the presidency a bed of roses. A certain pernickety Scots lawyer of mature age had come up to Balliol and made a study of the laws of the Union Society, on which he perpetually put to me (as President) various conundrums to answer; and I fear I had not made the necessary acquaintance with the regulations. On one occasion, I remember, he made a request to see some minutes (I think it was the minutes of the standing committee), quoting a rule which seemed to make it difficult to refuse his request; luckily I 'smelt a rat' and temporized, and had as my reward the assurance that had I granted the application, the whole committee would have resigned, as certain critical negotiations were in process, and could not be made public property at the time.

" Another troublesome business was this. There was a rule of the society which allowed members to have their letters stamped for them on payment (I think) of five shillings a term; and it was found that some member was taking advantage of this privilege to send out hundreds of circulars of an advertising nature, a quite illegal proceeding. In vain we tried to discover the offender, until at last we had to call in a detective, whose vigilance revealed in the miscreant a rather senior member of the University, and the brother of a well-known novelist. I forget the sequel.

" One other personal recollection I may perhaps be permitted, though it does not refer to the time of my presidency; but I had the rather peculiar pleasure of hearing a speech of mine referred to and quoted in a railway carriage eighteen years after it was delivered. I was travelling between North Wales and Chester, and the announcement of the appointment of my old friend the late Dr. Jayne to the bishopric of Chester had just appeared in the papers. There was another traveller in the carriage—an utter stranger to me—and we got into conversation about the new bishop. He said that he had once heard Dr. Jayne speak, years before. I asked where this was. 'At Oxford,' was the reply. I inquired the occasion, and the subject of this speech. 'Oh,' was the answer, 'it was at the Union, and the debate was on the subject of the proctors.' 'Indeed,' I said, 'I never heard Jayne speak at the Union, and I remember that particular debate very well.' 'Well,' said my companion, 'I recall especially one thing that he said,' 'What was that?' 'He said that the proctors were the keepers of the University conscience.' 'No,' I rejoined, 'I said that.' In point of fact, I had rather made fun of the motion, and argued that as man was a tripartite being, consisting of a physical, a mental, and a moral part, so should the University be. The undergraduates, especially the athletes, would stand for the bodily element, the dons for the intellectual, and if there were no proctors, how was the moral side to be represented? My fellow-traveller had misheard from somebody the name of the speaker and mistaken the name of James for Jayne.

" I have only to add that I am, and always shall be, deeply grateful to the Union Society for the part which it played in my Oxford education. I am convinced that undergraduates who go through their course here without joining it lose more than they realize at the time. It brings men into contact, more or less personal, with contemporaries who think ; it diverts their thoughts and conversation from the eternal topics of athletics and the problems of the schools ; and it enables them to hear the two (or should I say the many ?) sides of every question debated. It is a nursery of thought, of speech, of culture."

These memories from a flowing pen now come to be merged in reflections concerning the Union Jubilee banquet, but that is another story, and one which will be told in the next chapter by those who were present.

CHAPTER XIII

THE JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF OCTOBER 22, 1873

WHEN fifty years had gone by it seemed only right to let the world know what solid reasons for gratification were attached to the Union, if only for its parliamentary and other successes, and so it was decided to hold a banquet and even a ball. The banquet could not be held on the society's premises for lack of room. The Corn Exchange was requisitioned: and no doubt the chief credit of the whole business belonged to Mr. Herbert Henry Asquith of Balliol, who was secretary to the special committee. His name alone was an omen highly propitious, because he was destined to carry on into the second fifty years that great tradition which Gladstone had established. But it was Edward Nicholson, long Bodley's Librarian, who claimed to be *hujus anniversarii auctor.*

To those who might attend the great evening's function from far and near it could be pointed out how well the Union was holding its own in the realms of reading and debate. The librarianship kept on changing: fresh spirits developed: the office had passed from Duggan of Lincoln and Hollings of Corpus to Cruttwell, a famous assimilator of honest classical lore. Cruttwell, in his turn, had been linked with men like Grose of Queen's and Richards of Wadham. Looking ahead, it chanced, many years later, that Mr. Richards, then fellow of Wadham, was able to help Mr. Grose, fellow of Queen's, in service to the Union. This is an instance of the strength of the Union as a tie for life. The presidency of Mr. Grose, who was a double first-classman and a thoughtful speaker, belonged to 1871. About that time Mr. Richards held the librarianship. It was in the year 1894 that Mr. Grose, indefatigable as senior treasurer of the society and practically its master, sought relief from the Oxford strain by a visit to India.

Then his old Union colleague Mr. Richards steered the society through a period which was very active and yet was not without some anxieties for all concerned. Thus were two periods and two personalities joined together in mutual service rendered to the Union. Looking backward, too, and yet keeping pace with a forward movement which belongs to the present hour, one name amongst those which swell the librarians' roll must be mentioned with due veneration and regard, for in Mr. Walter Lock of Magdalen (Canon Lock of Christ Church) the record touches that Oxford which seems to outlast all superficial change. Eminent alike as scholar and teacher, Dr. Lock has served the University in many capacities for a term approaching sixty years: and he will look back with pride, past the winning of honours, even past the holding of a headship, to the days when orators dealt boldly or timidly with questions of national concern, and he himself watched, as a Union President, the outgiving and intaking which leads to leadership among men.

So in due time, the anniversary of 1873 was conspicuously blessed in fortune present and in fortune to come. A picture of the Union just before its jubilee could hardly be shown more characteristically than in a debate on Church Disestablishment which occupied three evenings in May, 1873, and was carried through with the greatest animation. Over this the late Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett presided, and in it Mr. Asquith took a very prominent part. The presidency for the final term of the same year—the jubilee term—was held by R. G. C. Mowbray of Balliol, later Sir Robert Mowbray, who had the satisfaction of receiving, as one of the most honoured guests at the celebration, his own father, the first baronet of his line and an ex-President, one who was ready at any time in his life to re-enact with zest the scenes in which the society had indulged, including, as he said, more than one free fight for its existence. Other Balliol men supported the younger Mowbray in spirit, for the chair had been occupied but a few terms earlier by James Annan Bryce, and again by William Macdonald Sinclair, subsequently Archdeacon of London. Balliol thus continued to send into public life men of varied talents, for this second Bryce offered manifold gifts to the public service as a Scottish member of Parliament. Sinclair had quite an historic interest in the Union—as son of the " Skimmerian Sinclair " whose fame had been at its height when the combative knighthood of the Union was full in flower. To this company of light and leading New College contributed also. Thus, to the roll of useful, rising names, A. K. Cook, a notable Wykehamist and the historian of Winchester College, and J. T. Nance, subsequently a canon of Birmingham, must be added : nor must F. S. Pulling of Exeter be overlooked, for he was one who helped to prepare the ground in which new seed was certain to fructify, as was clearly shown when the gathering of October 22, 1873, struck the resounding note of the jubilee.

The fact that no fewer than four hundred men were accommodated at the various tables in the Exchange is a proof of the genuine enthusiasm which had been engendered in Oxford and outside Oxford too. The fifty years which this celebration crowned had an inward meaning and an intimate appeal for all Oxford men. The scene, in its extraordinary animation, was brilliant in the extreme. And yet the sense of a certain incompleteness affected not a few of those who were present. Mr. Gladstone did not appear. It was natural, of course, that neither the Prince of Wales nor Prince Leopold had felt able to accept an invitation. This was not a political gathering. Yet the Union had become identified with political feelings, and it is a significant fact that the partisanship rife in England at that time manifested itself more than once during the evening.

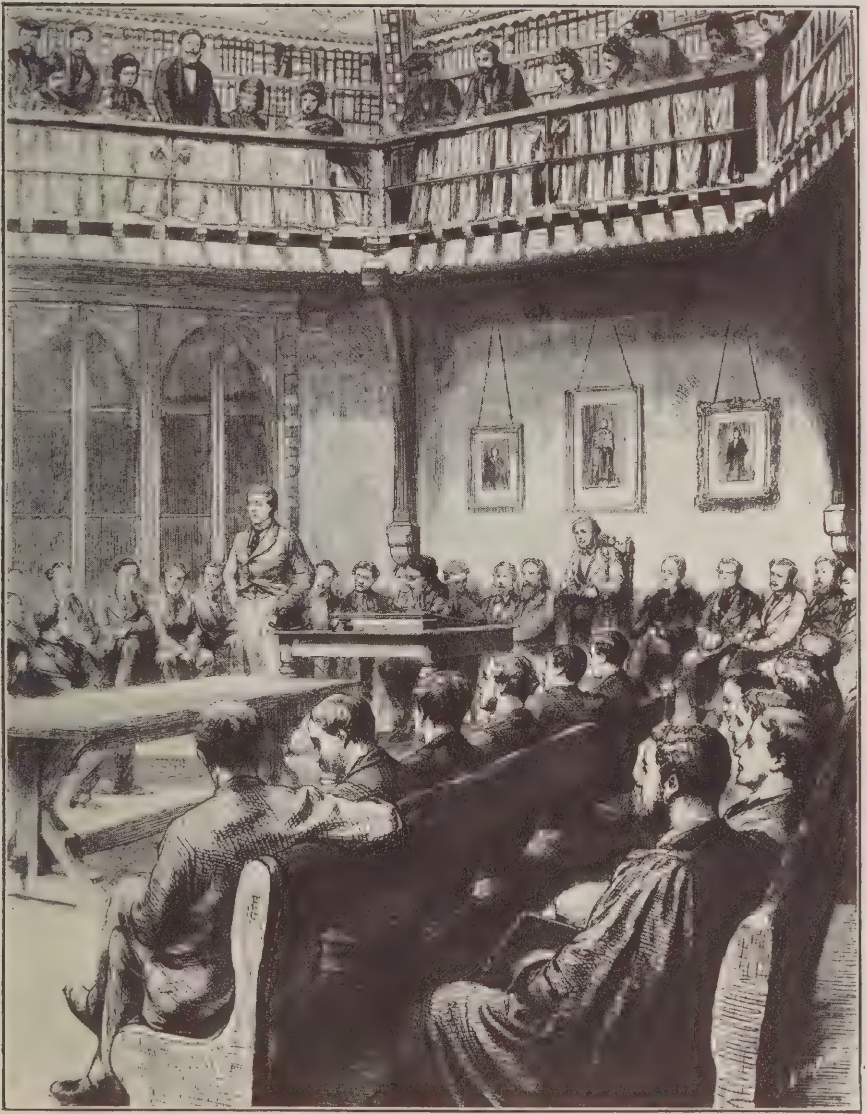
As figure after figure was recognized, famous in public life, the healthiest cheers were raised, and surely nothing could be more heartening, after the conflict of half a lifetime or longer, than to step into an arena so friendly to the accompaniment of echoes even friendlier. Those who know the facile and generous emotion of youth, especially of Oxford youth, will calculate easily enough the force which brought blushes to the cheek of many a man who had half-forgotten that he appeared as a hero. Here was the Lord High Chancellor, Selborne ; the Archbishop of Canterbury, Tait ; the Chancellor of the University, Lord Salisbury. Every memory in the room thrilled with gratitude and encouragement. Excellence and variety made the assembly a national epitome. But to enlarge on this would be tedious. It is rather the less general, the less obvious, which at this distance of time will appeal. And a certain note was struck by one individual, a note which vibrated in all hearts long afterwards because it was so impressive, strange, even unique. That note was struck by Archbishop (not yet Cardinal) Manning. It was not that all regarded the eminent guest in the same way. Even here, even now, one question brought trouble. Ruffled by the precedence given, which had led to a higher place for the Archbishop of Westminster than two Anglican bishops had received, an offended cleric (Professor Heurtley) left the room and afterwards wrote to the papers about it most frankly and most freely. For him, the matter was no mere prejudice. It was principle : and indeed, as things were, if he had put the matter to the vote he would probably have carried the day. Lord Salisbury, however, with great tact, succeeded in giving a fresh turn to the proceedings by setting his own precedence aside, and any slight irritation was soon dissolved in laughter.

It happened, indeed, that of the many scores made that evening, Manning scored the highest. It was said by Mr. J. G. Swift McNeill, M.P., that whilst every speaker was most cordially greeted, Manning received an ovation, not only then, but the next day, when, on entering the Union rooms, he was hailed with the respect which would have been given to royalty. At dinner, he spoke at times in a solemn hush, his emotions visibly swayed as he recalled scenes and memories, after such changes, in such surroundings. " He stood perfectly erect with a kind of subdued melancholy, while his keen eagle eyes surveyed the scene."

The speeches generally, with their many tributes to the society, may be, in part at least, here quoted from the official report of the banquet.

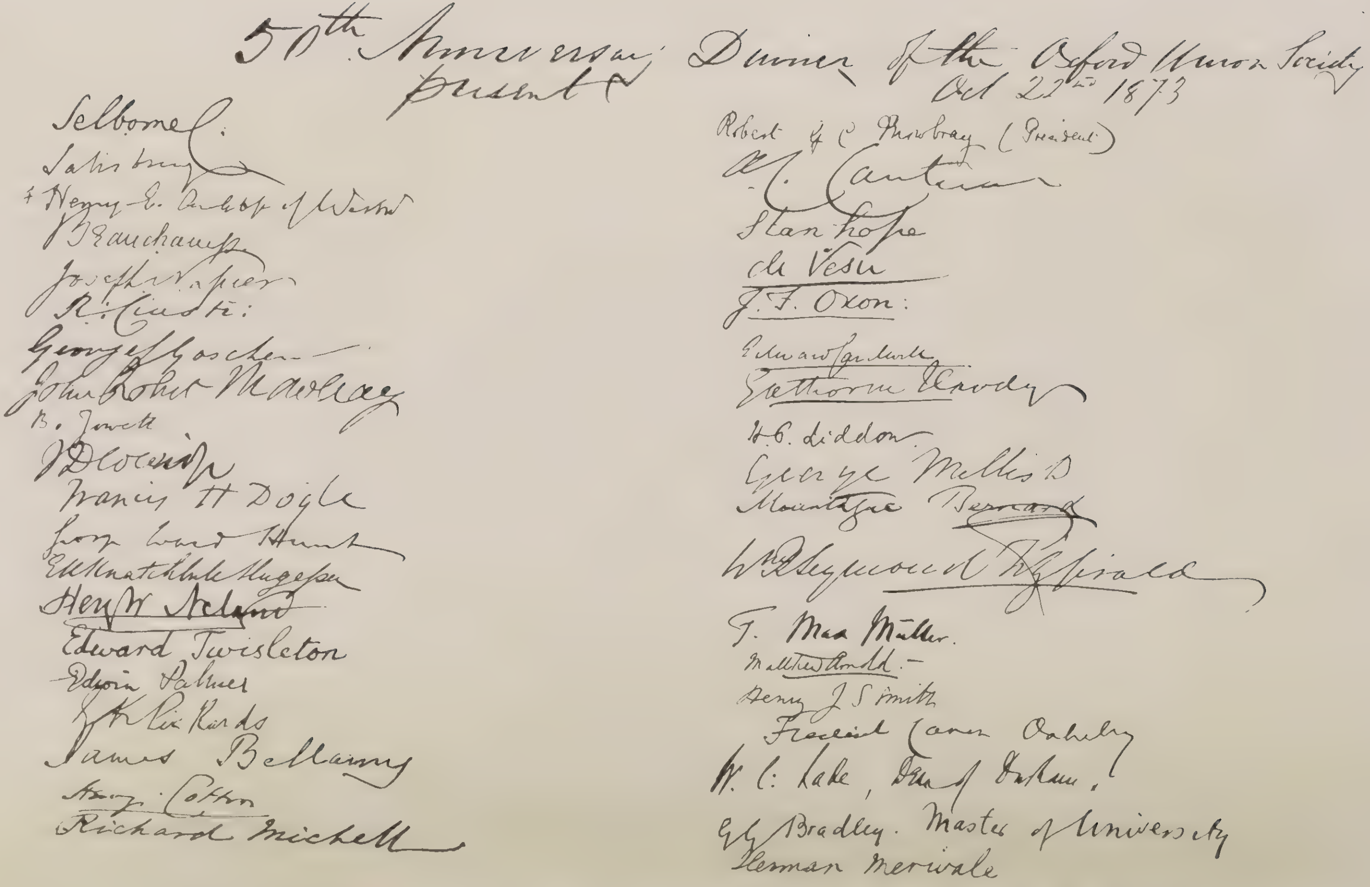
Only at the end of his reply to the toast of " The Church " did the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY refer to the Union.

" We are met to celebrate the jubilee of this especial society (hear, hear). The Church of England, I believe, owes much to this society (hear, hear). I believe that every man who has been a member of it, and who has felt the energy imparted to him by its debates, must testify to the benefit he received ; and in after years, when youthful spirits, which naturally flowed at the time, have calmed down, men do not regret the early discussions, even though some have changed their opinions. I believe that our ministers of the Church have found an advantage in such gatherings as we have had in this society (hear, hear). I believe that there is no one here present, but will testify to the benefit received from this society. I see around this table many old faces, and memory goes back to times — to times when we were more intimately related than we are now ; and yet though we may have separated one from another, I hope and trust that we all respect each other's deep convictions (cheers). Friends may be separated from us, but we all look back with great satisfaction to the work which we carried on together in this society. We owe much in discharging our sacred duties, as



JUBILEE OF THE UNION: DEBATE ON THE DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH.

From a Drawing in the "Graphic," May 31, 1873.



50th Anniversary Dinner of the Oxford Union Society
Present
Oct 22nd 1873

Selborne C.
Salisbury
+ Henry E. Archbp of Westmr
Beauchamp
Joseph Napier
R. Cicestr:
George J. Goschen
John Robert Mowbray
B. Jowett
J D Coleridge
Francis H Doyle
George Ward Hunt
E Knatchbull Hugessen
Henry W Acland
Edward Twisleton
Edwin Palmer
J. Richards
James Bellamy
Henry Cotton
Richard Michell

Robert G C Mowbray (President)
A. C. Cantuar
Stanhope
de Vesci
J. F. Oxon:
Edward Cardwell
Gathorne Hardy
H. P. Liddon
George Mellish
Mountague Bernard
W R Seymour Fitzgerald
F. Max Müller.
Matthew Arnold.
Henry J S Smith
Frederick Canon Oakeley
W. C. Lake, Dean of Durham.
G G Bradley. Master of University
Herman Merivale

SOME SIGNATURES FROM THE ATTENDANCE ROLL OF THE JUBILEE DINNER.

well as those private duties to which we have been called in our different spheres, to that training and that generous emulation which this society encouraged forty years ago."

The Right Hon. J. R. Mowbray, M.P., proposing the toast of "The Army and Navy" coupled with the names of Mr. Cardwell and Mr. Goschen, said: "I venture confidently to affirm that the success of my right honourable friends is mainly attributable to their Union training (hear, hear). There are many persons, I know, who regard the Union as merely a debating society, but I think this to be a great mistake (hear, hear). There are imperial politics, and there are Union politics. Regarded on the side of imperial politics, it may be called a deliberative society; but regarded on the side of Union politics, I look upon it as a great school for the development of the combative element (hear, hear).

"It was my good fortune to be present as a freshman forty years ago, in the month of November, 1833, at a meeting of the Ramblers' Association. The 'Uniomachia' has been recorded in immortal verse; it was a battle of the heroic age; it was really a battle of giants. Now the lion and the lamb—two Secretaries of State (laughter)—repose harmoniously in one united cabinet; but then my right hon. friends the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for War were ranged on opposite sides (laughter). My right hon. friend the Home Secretary was then the champion of a government of combat, leading a desperate assault with all his wonted energy, and contending throughout a desperate combat, almost single-handed against unequal odds. My right hon. friend Mr. Cardwell was there also, but he commanded the reserve of the opposition. His martial qualities were scarcely then fully developed; he took no part in the action; and the poet who records the history of the day speaks of 'Cardwell's graceful mien' (laughter), but never mentions his warlike demeanour (laughter). My noble and learned friend the Lord Chancellor was there, full of martial ardour; but his pugnacious propensities were restrained by the direct interposition of Minerva, who—

> " Gliding down the sky,
> Soft counsel whispered from a gaslight high ;
> . . . . The warrior heard,
> Knit his dark brow, and loth obeyed the word."

My most reverend friend the Archbishop of Canterbury, who has recalled his recollections of forty years ago to-night, was there too on that occasion, foremost in the fray, animated by Mars himself, with a double portion of his own spirit ; and of him the poet went on to say—

> " With thundering sound,
> Tait shook his tasselled cap and sprang to ground.
> Dire was the clang and dreadful from afar
> Of Tait indignant rushing to the war."

(Great laughter and cheers.) That is my first recollection of my most reverend friend in that early life when I was privileged to listen to the debates of the Union ; and I am quite confident that if his calling through life had not been a peaceful one, his spirit was such as to have led the charge at Balaklava, or to have taken command of the Channel Fleet. It was in this school that my friends Mr. Cardwell and Mr. Goschen were reared : it was here they learned the art of war."

THE RIGHT HON. E. CARDWELL, M.P., in reply said : " Mr. Mowbray has spoken of the many advantages derived from the Union ; and will he permit me to add one more to the catalogue ? I think the kindly temper which in the real contests of life we are able to exhibit one towards another, and the mutual respect and regard which we entertain for one another, irrespective of all considerations and irrespective of all differences of opinion, were partly infused into us in our early contests in this society (cheers). I think it is forty years since my right hon. friend and I were colleagues on the committee of the Union. Public affairs of course were open questions in that cabinet ; but when we thought the interests of the society were in question, nothing could exceed our unanimity, and nothing surpass our zeal.

THE RIGHT HON. G. J. GOSCHEN, M.P., said:

" Brevity was not one of the virtues that were inculcated in the Union in my days (laughter) ; but whether as we have advanced in life we have improved in that virtue, or what class has most improved in that virtue—statesmen, peers, members of the House of Commons, members of the Church, or members of the Bar—we may possibly see to-night by an experimental method (laughter). For my part I wish to be brief. I should be brief in any case, if only for this reason—that with one exception all those who have addressed you hitherto have spoken of the forty years since they were at Oxford, while I can only claim one half of this retrospect, belonging as I do to a different generation—a generation of twenty years ago. But I ought to be brief for another reason. Most of the toasts which have been proposed and responded to to-night touch some chords—some particular chords in the breasts of the members of the Union. They are associated, one may believe, with memories of many interesting animated debates ; but I imagine that if I looked back over the fifty years celebrated here to-night, I should not find one single instance of a naval subject having interested or occupied the debates of the Oxford Union Society. I have been at the Admiralty long enough—as my right hon. friend says (laughter)—to know that no one could preside over this profession without being deeply interested in every question connected with it (hear, hear). I have been there long enough to value the men who in the naval profession are daily practising the virtues which has made England what she is ; and to wonder how this great service, so national and so popular, has never during the last fifty years appeared on the records of the debates of the Oxford Union Society " (cheers).

ARCHBISHOP MANNING, on rising to propose the next toast, "The House of Lords and the House of Commons" was received with prolonged cheering. He said: "When on Monday last I received from the President of the Oxford Union Society, in his own name and in the name of the committee, a desire that I should take part in proposing the toast which I shall presently offer to you, I confess I felt upon me the reminiscences of forty-five years ago, and the awful authority of the Chair to which I always implicitly bowed.

"I confess when I heard the right hon. gentleman, the Secretary for War, speak of coming back after forty years' wandering in the wilderness as a cause of thankfulness because we have been permitted to assemble to-night, and to see so many whom we remember with such pleasure in the early days long past (hear, hear), my reflections have been rather on the other side. When I look for those countenances I remember five and forty years ago, and listen for those voices here which Parliament has heard in that period, I cannot but regard the retrospect as mournful, and in the midst of this festivity I can fully appreciate the saying I have heard from soldiers, that the saddest moment of their lives was when they met at mess after their first battle (hear, hear). I look, my Lord, in vain for the form and countenance of the Duke of Newcastle, whose measured eloquence was trained in the discussions of the Oxford Union. I look also for Lord Dalhousie and Lord Canning, whose administrative powers were no doubt developed by the part they took in the debates of the Union. I look likewise for Lord Elgin, whose oratory, whose copious imagination and rapidity of speech when at the Union gave promise of the perfection he afterwards attained. I look also for the noble form of one who has been taken from among us, who to his last days continued to show the manly affection which was one of his greatest characteristics: I allude to one who has always been known, both living and dead, by his Christian name—Sidney Herbert (applause).

" These are memories which, I confess, fill me with sadness for they bring to my mind the losses we have sustained in those great men. There is yet another, a right reverend prelate, whom I remember well: of whom one of the members of the Union said to me, that he was the most eloquent man he had ever heard among us, and the only man who recalled to him Homer's description of Ulysses, with words flowing fast and soft as flakes of snow from his lips, —I mean the late Samuel Wilberforce (applause),—who has been taken from us by a sudden shock,—a strange and painful end to a life so gentle. I confess that these reminiscences came full upon me; and I look back therefore upon those days with thankfulness, indeed, that so many of us still survive, and yet I could have wished that this great festival could have been graced and gladdened with their presence. But I cannot look at those who have been members of this Union, who now are members of the Legislature, and hold high offices of State, without looking also to those before me who are to form the material of future legislators—future Lord Chancellors, future Prime Ministers, future Secretaries of War, future First Lords of the Admiralty, future Attorney-Generals—not prompted by the low ambition of calculating minds, but by the high aspiration of men who desire to do good service to the Commonwealth, and who now are training themselves in all the fire of youth, the vigour of their fresh intellect, and the energy of their will, set upon our great public service, in the Oxford Union" (applause).

EARL STANHOPE, responding for the House of Lords, said: " I am old enough, I regret to say, to remember this Union in the first term of its existence, now half a century ago. If in those days it could have been compared to any sect of ancient philosophers, it certainly must have been to the *Peripatetics*; for in those days it was a wandering body without a fixed abode (laughter). We were not allowed to make any settlement, and we could only meet according to the hospitality of friends who happened to be possessed of spacious rooms (hear, hear). When I see the progress that the Union has made, and the settled state that it has secured for itself, I cannot but rejoice both at the stately building and the recognized position (cheers). I remember with great pleasure instances of persons who belonged to the Union who have since attained distinction. There were others with whose friendly recollection some feeling of amusement mingles, when I recollect how their long continued silence amidst our debates used to be explained by some affectionate relative—some admiring aunt perhaps,—' There cannot be a doubt that my dear nephew would have spoken beautifully if he had ever tried, but unluckily he never did try!' (laughter). In that time of our classic studies we might in such a case be reminded of a well-known passage of Virgil, where the poet declares of his hitherto unborn hero, that if ever he should come to light or ever grow to manhood he would be altogether unsurpassed in war.

"*Seu cum pedes iret in hostem*
Seu spumantis equi foderet calcaribus armos."

No doubt it is easy to be unconquerable if you have never contended!" (laughter).

The Right Hon. Gathorne Hardy, responding for the House of Commons, said:

"Although in one sense I was a very active member of the Union, I was one of those who never rose but on a single occasion, and was not then called upon to speak; but such was my timidity, after that adventurous effort, that I contented myself thenceforth in learning lessons from those eloquent gentlemen who have been referred to to-night. I was present on the occasion which has been referred to by Mr. Mowbray, but I was among the reserve forces, and was never brought into action; I was one of those who received my education, not by speaking, but by listening to those who spoke so well on all occasions, and I have no doubt that I derived much advantage during the golden silence which the toastmaster seems to have wished that I should still observe" (laughter).

The toast of "The University of Oxford" was given by the ATTORNEY-GENERAL (SIR J. D. COLERIDGE, M.P.), with many references to those who had been his colleagues.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, the Chancellor of the University, on rising to reply, was received with repeated rounds of cheering. He said:

"I cannot forget that we are here this evening not to celebrate the University of Oxford, but a remarkable institution in it—an institution which is more remarkable because it receives no official recognition from the University whatever. It is a glorious thing, and is strikingly illustrative of the way in which Englishmen do their work. I believe there is no educational instrument so valuable to the large class of students—I mean those who have to express themselves in public—as the Union Society; yet it is a voluntary association which has never received any sanction or recognition from the University; indeed in a certain portion of its career it has received that gentle stimulus which is always given to any English institution by the disapproval of those in authority (laughter).

"Now I think it is impossible to deny, when we consider the bead-roll of names which my friend Sir John Coleridge has so ably recited, that it is one of the most remarkable institutions any University ever produced. Its dignity is occasionally felt even outside Oxford; but perhaps it is less understood among a certain section of the undergraduates, who even affect to despise it. I have beside me the presidents of two debating societies—one noble lord in the chair who presides over another assembly, and who feels, no doubt, that it falls as far short in animation of that other whose president (Mr. R. G. C. Mowbray) also sits beside me, as it excels it in point of dignity (cheers). For I cannot but think that my noble friend, when sitting in his solitary and unapproachable grandeur, desiderates somewhat of the affluence of numbers, the energy of feeling and the readiness of applause, which is one of the great charms of this debating society, of which in our earlier career we were members (laughter and applause); and if it should ever be the fate of the present President of the Union to sit in that honourable place, I am afraid he will there find a considerable difference.

" Speaking generally, I have had some opportunity of observing the careers of public men, and I believe there is no one who has taken advantage of the debating society when at the University and who has had to make his appearance in public afterwards, but has benefited by it; and there are several who have had afterwards to undergo the ordeal who would have been much better for it if they had had the preliminary discipline of the Oxford Union Society (hear, hear, and laughter). It is a great honour to the independence and self-governing instinct of the English people, that a society, having had so great an influence for good, and producing so many distinguished men among its members, should be founded by the spontaneous action of the undergraduates themselves; and though you know there may be changes in store for the University, I trust there are none in store for the Union debating society (hear, hear).

" None of us can prophesy what will be the state of the University of Oxford ten years hence; but all of us can prophesy that fifty years hence another generation will meet to celebrate the ancient glories, the virtues, and the results of the Oxford Union Society" (loud cheers).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR proposed " The prosperity of the Oxford Union Society." He said:

" The longer we live, the better we love Oxford, the more heartily we desire its prosperity, the more heartily we desire that every good institution within it may continue to bring forth good fruit (cheers). My noble friend has said to you, and I think has said truly, that though not established by the laws of the place, though not under the sanction of public authority, the Oxford Union Society has proved itself by its fruits to be one of the best institutions of this University (cheers).

" Its first beginnings were evidently attended with many doubts and hesitations of mind ; for this morning, searching for a particular purpose the records of this society, I found that after it had been in existence five years this very modest and hesitating proposition was proposed to the society, supported by one vote, opposed by another, and carried by an extremely small majority : ' That eloquence has produced greater good than evil to mankind ' (laughter). The object of this society is to promote the growth of eloquence. I should be very sorry to enter upon a question which appeared so doubtful to the minds of the venerable founders of this society. There was much to be said on both sides, and it must have been felt to be an extremely difficult question, because on each side only one member ventured to speak. However, whether eloquence has been productive of more good or of more evil to society, this at all events is certain, that in every nation which breathes the atmosphere of freedom, eloquence has at all times been one of the most potent influences of society, from the days of Pericles and Demosthenes to those of Cicero, and from the days of Cicero to those of Pitt and Canning.

" Well, this society was founded to cultivate this power, and certainly the power has very much extended since the society was founded. I apprehend that now, when everybody can speak—and, I regret to say, everybody does speak (laughter)—it is certainly not less necessary now than it was fifty years ago that you should in your early days begin to learn to speak well. If it were possible to learn to speak shortly, it would undoubtedly be by no means a derogation from the value of this attainment (hear, hear, and laughter).

I will not dwell further upon this topic, in order that I may not falsify my own precepts by speaking too long; but I cannot help thinking we may with pride look to the men who have come from this society as a proof of the benefit that arises from this early cultivation of the art of speaking (hear, hear).

"I said just now that there were some men among the greatest ornaments of this society who ought to have been here present—not that I doubt they have sufficient reasons for their absence, but because I feel that this meeting is imperfect—that it is not what it ought to have been—in the absence of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe (cheers and dissent). Some very great ornaments of my own time have been lost to us; Sidney Herbert, the sweetest, the gentlest, and the most courteous of men; Lord Elgin, the Duke of Newcastle—who certainly was the worst speaker I ever remember in the society (laughter), and therefore the best example of the good the society does; for he lived to be a good and useful speaker (hear, hear); and there are some here in whose presence I will not say what they were (hear, hear); but in those days to which men of my generation look back there was one pre-eminent above all—a man who seemed even then to promise to be equal to the greatest men who ever adorned the senate with their eloquence—a man not behind Pitt or Canning—and that man was Mr. Gladstone (cheers and ironical cheers). If there are any to whom my remarks are not acceptable, I hope they will remember I am speaking not of Mr. Gladstone's opinions, but of his eloquence (hear, hear, and cheers) and his genius; and when I look back to what he was as a member and President of this society, I rejoice to know that we all foresaw in him the greatness which he has since achieved (cheers).

"I am not going to play the part of Nestor, or to say that the men of our day did greater things than you can do now (hear). I am quite certain, Mr. President, that the men of your generation cannot propose more foolish resolutions than a number of those which were proposed in former days, by men who have since lived to repent the follies of their youth. Some statements have been made, of which I could not help doubting the authenticity. I might have forgotten some things which had taken place, but it really did not seem to me possible that I could have placed the following outrageous proposition on the books of the society in the days of my youth, which if it had been carried might have called forth an injunction of the Court of Chancery: 'That the whole funds of the society at present in the hands of the treasurer be subscribed to promote the election of anti-reform members of Parliament, and that any deficiency that may accrue in consequence be made up by extraordinary subscriptions of the members generally.'

"On looking over this morning the books of the society, I was happy to find that, whatever errors I may have been guilty of, this at least was not one of them. Such a notice does, indeed, appear to have been actually given, though the motion was never made; but it was given by a namesake of mine (laughter)—a near relation—belonging to a different college—who, I am sorry to say, was not always sensible of the duty of seriousness in the speeches and motions which he made in this society. I will say nothing further on that subject, except that if some of us have corrected youthful errors there has not been much harm done (hear, hear). One thing only I will add in conclusion, that though there are many things which I regret in times past when I was an undergraduate—although there was time which might have been better employed in a great number of things—yet I do not for one moment regret an hour of the time which was spent in the Oxford Union Society" (hear and cheers).

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNION (Mr. R. G. C. Mowbray) returned thanks in the name of the society. He said:

"If you wish to read the history of the Oxford Union during the last fifty years, you must search the annals of your country; if you wish to read the names of those who have been foremost in serving their country in Church and State during the same period, you must read the lists of the Oxford Union Society. Therefore I wish to make no apology for not dwelling on the past, but I at once ask you to bear with me for a few moments while I speak of the present condition of the Union. Of that condition, it is almost presumptuous and invidious for me to speak. I will say only that if those who have honoured us with their presence here to-night are anxious to judge of what the present generation can do, I can but hope they will be present at the debate to-morrow night (applause).

" And yet in one respect I think that I may fairly claim for the Union Society a position of almost national importance at the present time. At a time when questions of more than usual national and social importance are coming to the surface, it is surely no small matter that the leaders and directors of public opinion should be trained in all the learning of our ancient Universities; and I claim for the Union Society that it specially represents one characteristic of Oxford training (hear, hear). It has ever been the tradition of Oxford that in her thought has not been divorced from fact; that her students have not forgotten that they are citizens, and that they have carried with them into the rough work of the Senate or the Bar something of the culture and refinement of the Schools " (cheers).

THE BISHOP OF CHICHESTER (Dr. Durnford), replying for " the ex-officers of the Union," referred to the society's early days. He said:

" We had great difficulties. We were not only a feeble but a persecuted people. I remember going on a deputation to the proctor, afterwards a distinguished bishop, and I remember with what scant courtesy we were received (hear, hear). We informed him that we had hired a room for the purpose of our meetings, and begged permission to assemble in it. His answer was, that if we dared to do so, his myrmidons should speedily dislodge us (laughter). And he was as good as his word; but the President was equal to the occasion (hear, hear). When the proctor's messenger arrived, the house was sitting; and having been admitted, he was desired to retire, that the house might take the proctor's message into consideration (cheers and laughter).

"Here in Oxford it is not likely that the regular studies of the University will be undervalued. But I suppose we all feel that there is a training and a discipline required beyond that which is prescribed in the University course: not indeed rewarded by public prizes and honours, but infinitely precious; and that training and that discipline is supplied by the society whose jubilee we are now met together to celebrate. I am perfectly satisfied that every one who has enjoyed and profited by that discipline is thankful (hear, hear). Whatever your calling or career, you know the advantage of having learned to express your thoughts with force and clearness, and to answer objections with readiness and power, especially in a country like our own, which promises every day to become more democratic (No! and dissent). Well, you must close your eyes to facts if you do not believe it (cheers). There is no eloquence like the eloquence of facts (hear, hear); and I repeat, this country is becoming more and more democratic, because power is placed more and more directly in the hands of the people, and the highest places in the land are becoming more and more accessible to all classes" (dissent).

To the toast of "The Bench and the Bar," proposed by the BISHOP OF OXFORD (Dr. Mackarness), LORD JUSTICE MELLISH responded; and MATTHEW ARNOLD and DR. ACLAND, Regius Professor of Medicine, responded to the toast of "Literature, Science, and Art," proposed by CANON LIDDON. John Ruskin, who had originally intended to come, was unable to be present.

The proceedings terminated at ten minutes past one. They had been a great success in spite of the inordinate length of some of the speeches. Sir John Coleridge sent a report to his friend John Wilson Patten. He described Archbishop Manning as " incomparably clever and artful." He mentioned the fact that Lord Selborne had dropped words about Gladstone which " provoked noise and contest." He dwelt on Tait's solemnity but also on his effectiveness. Mowbray had spoken very well. Coleridge did not add that he himself made music for his audience. But of course he did. Bishop Stubbs once described him as " the most complete person " he ever knew. The organization of the banquet was not quite perfect. Some few got little to eat. Dr. Hayman, at 1.30 a.m., was glad to get a biscuit from the President of St. John's. But as to oratory, the Union could only be hungering for more, and so the new morning dawned in joyous expectation.

CHAPTER XIV

ENTER A THIRD PRIME MINISTER—MR. ASQUITH: THE POLITICAL SUCCESSION CONTINUED: LORD CURZON: LORD MILNER: LORD AMPTHILL—A FAMOUS "BLUE."

AFTER the banquet, debates were naturally renewed with vigour, and to youth it might be pardoned if many felt that fame ought to grow with growth. To secure this, it is fortunate that a sense of continuity bestowed its own graces. Thrills of the world around—a wholly political world, as it seemed to that generation—possessed the constant urge towards reflection which so far had justified the society and all that it stood for. The first motion after the banquet ran in these terms: "That the Restoration of the Empire would form the best guarantee for the future prosperity of France."

On this occasion Sir John Mowbray took his son's place in the chair. Memories of old "Uniomachia" days were thus renewed to the delight of all. With this delight went the idea of necessary progress. Expansion was in the air. Even on the material side there were fresh needs to be considered. The gallery of the debating-hall was far too narrow; accommodation for books was wanted; the groans of librarians became audible. Plans were soon matured for a thoroughgoing improvement. Within five years the plans were ready by which the debating-hall became the library, and the foundation-stone of the new debating-hall was laid, on May 8, 1878, by the first Earl of Iddesleigh, long known as Sir Stafford Northcote, Chancellor of the Exchequer, a former treasurer of the society, one who had worked hard in the interests of the

Union in his Oxford days, with men like Buckley and Rawlinson of professorial fame, or like Robertson, the famous preacher of Brighton, who never made a speech at the Union without preparing for it by earnest prayer.

The proceedings at the laying of the foundation-stone were of course of the usual type. The enthusiasm of the banqueting-hall was repeated. It was even declared in some quarters that an effort was being made to capture the Union for the political party which Sir Stafford Northcote represented. R. A. Germaine of Brasenose, later a king's counsel, presided at this happy function, which brought a very large crowd together in celebration of the event. Mr. Alfred Waterhouse, R.A., was designer of the new building. The hall first came into use for debate under the presidency of one of the most successful journalists who ever took part in the proceedings of the Union, Edward Tyas Cook, a Wykehamist and a member of New College. For many years an accredited thinker and leader in the writing world, Sir E. T. Cook successively edited *The Westminster Gazette* and *The Daily News*, became collator with Mr. Alexander Wedderburn, K.C., of John Ruskin's famous books in their final and authoritative form, and served his country most ably to the end of his life.

There had been an epoch, not many years before, when those at Oxford who inherited the traditions of a Bryce or a Fearon, an Abbot or a Doyle, saw how the great American question of North against South might divide even English feeling into two camps: and now the emotions of many were stirred by the future of Europe, harassed, as it well might be for generations, by the Franco-German war, which had ended in a temporary triumph for Germany. On the American question, again, feeling in the Union, loyal to old members who were still active, cherished the recollection of how keenly, originally indeed, T. H. Green had treated the subject. Green had spoken definitely, as one who held that the War of Secession dwarfed all others. In the faithful memoir written by R. L.

Nettleship of Balliol it is recorded how the great question kept Green awake.

The rising philosopher in Green spoke with conviction in those Union debates. He also spoke with humour. When the advocates of the South had urged that the Northerners were the aggressors in the war, and that republican institutions were to blame for it, he answered the argument, first, with an amusing story, next, with a touch of passion. He spoke effectively enough of the rustic who had received a ferocious dog on the points of his pitchfork. On being remonstrated with for not having used the other end he replied: "I would have done, if the dog had come at me with the other end!" To the second part of the argument, this was the answer: "It is not a republic which is responsible for this war, but a slave-holding, slave-breeding, and slave-burning oligarchy, on which the curse of humanity rests."

Green looked forward. His interest in Oxford and Oxford men never waned. Thus he belongs to this galaxy of talent which passed enthusiasm on—through the days of the Robinsons, through Creighton, again, or Duggan, or Bosworth Smith—all men of character and aspiration.

Reginald Bosworth Smith had also left a tradition of idealism behind him in the Union. When he gained the presidency it had been without a contest. His name at Harrow, where he was for many years a master, stood for zeal, information, versatility, love for his kind, and almost as much love for animals. The late Lord Bryce would dwell, too, on his friend's intensities of feeling rather than on his humour, which became very notable in later life. Bosworth Smith's greatest effort at the Union, in fact, was over a case in which he believed his own country had behaved disgracefully. Here was a Japanese tragedy, the massacre of Kagosima—"one of the most fiendish things ever done in war." He never let himself go without feeling that he was desperately in the right, and that those who opposed him were desperately in the wrong. Time wrought no havoc with his convictions. He remained, too, a devoted adherent of the church in which he had been brought up, believing that within her boundaries every man could find both peace and liberty. As he wrote in 1886: " I regard the Church of England as a unique and perfectly priceless institution."

Such words as these are straws on the stream, but there was a noticeable drift in Union politics, so that whether in 1862 or in 1882 or in 1892—not perhaps much later—national policy for the Church of England did raise acutest feeling. The interests of the society, as has been seen, were manifold. Sometimes they were abstract. A curious motion once ran in these terms: " That the use of euphemisms, inasmuch as they tend to conceal the deformity of vice, is prejudicial to morality." This motion was carried in spite of a powerful speech in opposition delivered by Lyulph Stanley. But it would certainly be a euphemism to declare that the debates at the Union were wholly free from rancour over matters involving religion, because theology was nominally debarred. In truth, the problems circling around the Church of England were most keenly sifted. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century these matters changed their bearings in Oxford generally and also in the Union. Up to that time they very definitely coloured the proceedings. To carry a motion in any degree antagonistic to the Church of England before 1900 would have been almost unthinkable. And yet in every other way, liberalism, not necessarily political liberalism, made great strides. It was not the talking, as such, which was ever really important, but the atmosphere of thought.

Round the old fireplace in the library of the Union capacious chairs are ranged to-day. They look, in winter, like so many emblems of the reading life. The fireplace itself is emblematic too. It is of curious construction, for it consists of two fireplaces back to back. These two fireplaces are covered by a great square slab of marble, and the fireplace consumes its own smoke, which is a mystery, symptomatic of vanished speeches though it be. By an ingenious arrangement, the channel for disappearing smoke connects with flues beneath the floor. Those who read and reflect may be tempted to let their thoughts stray to the speakers who assembled here in those last years, for the fireplace played a conspicuous part, and the change over to the newer building was made with regret. There was many a long and lingering look behind.

Those last years under the fading frescoes brought a number of men forward whose names, identified always with Oxford and often with the world, spell a unity in diversity for which the Union mind and the Union sentiment only can account. Contemporary with Bosworth Smith could be remembered Daniel of Worcester, the master-printer, a great Oxford figure in later days, and like J. R. King of Merton and Aeneas Mackay of University, a great lover and custodian of books. Edward Caird, too, gave service in his capacity as librarian, taking the Union life on the way to high philosophical distinctions outside the Oxford to which he was eventually to return as Master of Balliol. Sir A. H. Turner, who became Attorney-General for Jersey, added to the Christ Church strength of which Bishop Talbot has spoken ; whilst Strachan-Davidson intensified once more the hold of Balliol on the Union, as well became a man who was one day to preside, like Caird, over the destinies of that great college. So, in swift procession as officers, these men, with many others, maintained and increased their command of ready speech in the interests of the society as a whole. When the debates were fully attended, and this happened very often when men of the capacity of Gould of Trinity, or Asquith of Balliol, or Hadden of Merton, or Horton of New College appeared, this old fireplace, centrally in a direct line from the President on his throne at the eastern end of the hall, became the gathering-place of a crowd of men, the very heart, indeed, of many an animated scene.

Naturally in such a succession of interesting figures, one will occasionally stand out in pre-eminence. Mr. Asquith not only asserted himself in this way for some years, but the unity in diversity for which the Union had become remarkable was greatly emphasized by his very special gifts.

As Dr. James of St. John's has said : " Asquith showed much promise of his later oratorical power." Whatever may have been said for or against his attitude towards the burning questions of his time, his consistency could not be doubted, whether during his industrious, highly specialized Oxford life, or during that much longer period which proved him in storm or in sunshine a vigorous enthusiast for Liberal principles. It could not have been the influence solely of Benjamin Jowett which made him a Liberal, but from the day he went up to Balliol he proved himself something more than a typical disciple of the Master.

However much Asquith might appear as the finished politician whilst yet a young man, however little he might seem to have to learn, he started from the bottom in the Union, and so worked his way up to the presidency. He took the Union quite seriously ; it was said that he regarded it as one of his schools. With an extraordinary power of work, in spite of his delicate appearance at this time, he never seemed overburdened, and his only distractions from solid study of classics were walking and the Union debates. It is recorded of him that he never made the mistake of speaking too often, and one consequence of this was that he was greatly sought after as a speaker.

At the time when Mr. Asquith was President of the Union, J. Ashton Cross of Balliol was librarian, H. A. Venables of New College was treasurer, and G. R. Parkin was secretary. The great innovation in Oxford life for which Cecil Rhodes was responsible raised Sir George Parkin, ultimately, to a leading position in Oxford. It was some twenty-eight years after he had held the secretaryship that Parkin reappeared at the Union and delivered himself, during the presidency of Mr. du Parcq of Exeter, of a telling speech on Oxford ideals in education, observing on November 6, 1902, that he was one of those who had seen a great wave of enthusiasm pass over Oxford, and this was a special tribute to the value of the Union debates—" *consule Planco* "—in the time when the famous Liberal Prime Minister had carried all before him. At this later date the charge against Oxford ideals of education was that these were unsound and obsolete. But Sir George Parkin, though he spoke up for broadening the University, entered at the same time a plea for Oxford as it stood, and so he ranged himself with many who had gone before him. He lived to see a Rhodes scholar President in Mr. R. M. Carson of Oriel.

When Mr. H. H. Asquith was conspicuous in the Union lists, a notable speaker had been M. H. Gould of Trinity, his immediate predecessor as President. There followed, in terminal order, Venables, Sloman of Pembroke, Raleigh of Balliol, H. W. Paul of Corpus, G. M. Savery of Lincoln, and then, in the summer term of 1876, Alfred Milner. The year 1877 was remarkable for an unexpected change in the presidency, which gave four Presidents to this year. It was (Sir) Dunbar Barton, for many years a leading judge in Ireland, who succeeded R. H. Hadden of Merton, in after life a very well-known figure in the ecclesiastical life of London. A. A. Baumann of Balliol, a very famous figure in the Union, preceded Lymington of the same college.

A speech of Mr. Baumann's on October 19, 1876, centred the interest of Oxford in the orator, who became President for the summer term of 1877. The Hon. St. John Brodrick (Lord Midleton) had brought forward a motion in favour of Lord Derby's Eastern policy. " Bulgarian atrocities " were the actual subject of debate. R. H. Hadden was in the chair. R. F. Horton of New College opposed.

Of the activity of this time an admirable account has been given by Professor E. B. Poulton (one of the few scientists who have taken part in the Union debates, and the only Fellow of the Royal Society who has occupied the Union chair) in his book of Oxford memories. The Dr. Horton of these days is famous as a Free Church divine. His work has inspired a thousand lives. In religious fervour the Horton of Union fame did not abate his convictions, nor did he need to abate them. He answered opposition or he lived it down. There were opportunities, even in Union debates, to exercise the faith and knowledge which have been his own at all times. Dr. Horton may look back, also, to another side of the old, happy life ; for there hung in his rooms at New College a certain trophy. This was an oar, a reminder of the time when he rowed in his college eight, and the boat made four bumps in six nights.

Dr. Horton's term as President preceded that of Lord Midleton. The next years, which were to see the last debates in the old hall, found Mr. F. R. Burrows of Trinity, or the late Mr. N. Micklem, K.C., for some years M.P. for Watford, in office. Mr. R. Dawson of Hertford, who at one time represented East Leeds, and Mr. B. R. Wise, the very active-minded Agent-General for New South Wales, now gave their time and energy to the Union. The new debating-hall was sufficiently alluring to draw original characters like Graham Wallas of Corpus, now a prominent figure in the University of London, occasionally into the arena. Diplomacy was exercised in the secretarial seat when A. H. Hardinge of Balliol—later Sir A. H. Hardinge, the well-known ambassador —was its occupant. B. R. Wise of Queen's, President in the summer of 1880, yielded his office to the Hon. G. N. Curzon of Balliol.

Of the influence of Lord Curzon, now Chancellor of the University, much relating to Oxford might be written. It is said of him as a young man that he never passed through the stage of immaturity. To him the more intricate questions of foreign politics were of personal concern from the beginning of his Union career. The range of his information became a legend in the colleges. His sedateness, his seriousness, his aloofness, prevented the familiarity which were and still are common in the society ; but this did not mean that Lord Curzon could not unbend. When many years later he came to inaugurate the new buildings, it was in his capacity as Chancellor, and a very great ovation awaited him from a company which included hundreds of ex-officers and life-members. The date was June 1, 1911. In the interval of his appearances at the Union Lord Curzon had administered vast territories of the Crown, and he had proved himself master of many kinds of instruction.

There can be no doubt that Milner of Balliol held the attention of the Union much as Asquith or Curzon had held it. When Lord Milner was President, Sir Herbert Warren, then of Balliol, was librarian. To the President of Magdalen, whose term already approaches forty years and may yet attain a jubilee, the Union was a real interest in a very lively period of political movements. The characters of public men were visibly changing. Political somersaults were quite a common thing. The late Lord Goschen, visiting Oxford, expressed himself in glowing terms about Milner's speeches at the Union, and Lord Milner himself has proved, in many ways, the truth of prophecy. His term of office as President in the summer of 1876 has been looked upon with pride ever since. These days of intense political feeling were days of joy. It was glorious to " dish the Radicals." The end justifies the means. It seemed to many that to believe in the national cause for Ireland was foolish, more, it was treasonable.

Fierceness was the grand characteristic of Oxford politicians, in the Union or out, especially over this terrible question of Ireland. The names of the Hon. A. A. Capell, the Hon. W. R. W. Peel—the second Viscount Peel, secretary in 1886—

came before the house. C. J. Blacker of Merton was President in the summer of 1887, and we must not forget Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen, Minister of Agriculture in a time of stress, who has worked like a Trojan for many a patriotic cause. He always upheld the Conservative principles, which he has never abandoned. Sir Arthur was President in 1888. Mr. A. D. Tupper-Carey of Christ Church was one of the most frequent speakers under the presidency of Godfray of Exeter; of Hawkins of Balliol (" Anthony Hope ") ; of Green of Keble ; on into the time of A. J. McGregor of Oriel, another President in the early part of 1888, whose services have been given with great success to South Africa. Tupper-Carey held the secretaryship for a term. Amongst this company the name of Mr. H. G. Snowden of Lincoln must be recorded as President. He succeeded Mr. S. C. Parmiter of Oriel, a most able and convincing speaker, whose career at Uppingham has now been exchanged for the vicarage of Crendon in Northamptonshire. The leaders of 1889 were Mr. G. F. Mortimer of Balliol, now Recorder of Rotherham ; the Hon. A. G. V. Peel of New College ; and Mr. F. H. Coller of Christ Church.

Mr. F. H. Coller will tell us something of this time. He writes :—

" Oxford was eminently Conservative in the late 'eighties ; it was with considerable difficulty that one could get two Liberal ' star ' speakers for debates. The Queen's Jubilee seemed to have ushered in a period of apathy, and the more aristocratic Conservative clubs, the Canning and the Chatham, were affected with sleeping sickness. This gave an opportunity to the Strafford Club, which had been formed some few years before and had the virility of youth. Of the six Union Presidents elected from Michaelmas, 1888, to the summer term, 1890, no fewer than four were Strafford men ; two of them were unopposed, while in one contested election the rival candidates came from the same club. The club's political leadership in the University was shown by the fact that when

Sir Richard Webster made his great speech of vindication after the Parnell trial, Oxford was the chosen platform and the Strafford Club the covering shield.

"Lack of political interest sometimes reacted upon the membership of the Union, and on its debates. Lord Hugh Cecil and Lord Peel were regular attendants who never attained the presidential chair ; the former never stood because he had the rather nice but mistaken notion that his election would be a tribute to his name rather than to his personal ascendancy, the latter was defeated on a small poll by Mr. S. C. Parmiter. The Thersites of the drama was Mr. E. M. Giveen, now junior counsel to the Treasury. Depression, however, was short-lived. There was plenty of potential vigour, and its first expression was material.

"In the spring of 1890, the financial position of the Union was so unsatisfactory that it was determined to resort to an advertising splash in order to quicken its vitality. There was no question of extravagant administration. An ideal senior treasurer had been appointed two years before in Mr. Grose, and the new steward, Mr. William Gill, was appointed during the Easter vacation. The aim was to attract undergraduates coming up in the following October term in the belief, afterwards justified, that outward and visible increase would be accompanied by inward and spiritual vigour. The rooms were old and shabby ; it was determined to expend £1,000 on a new smoking room, which would be constructed and furnished with comparative indifference to cost, and in order to raise the £1,000 there was instituted an Oxford Union Decoration Fund, for which an appeal was sent to notables throughout the country. The appeal was instantly successful. The Queen, the Prince of Wales, the Prime Minister (who was also Chancellor of the University), with the addition of two ducal graduates, formed an irresistible nucleus. £1,500 was raised without difficulty and, the close of the Long Vacation was heralded by full-length displays in the illustrated newspapers of the new renaissance smoking room. The balance of the subscriptions was expended in less ornate but perhaps more tasteful decoration of other portions of the building. The bait caught on ; freshmen joined incontinently, and reluctant second-year men confessed that there might be something in it. The perfecting of the material structure raised the society to a suitable plane for the rhetorical triumphs of John Simon and F. E. Smith.

"In this recuperative scheme valuable assistance was lent by Mr. C. T. Knaus and Mr. A. E. Ripley, both of Trinity, and they were rewarded by election as President and junior treasurer respectively, for the October term. Ripley defeated W. H. Cozens-Hardy of New College, who thereupon prepared for a *révanche*. Galbraith's presidency in the summer term of 1891 marked the last period of quiet enjoyment. The Trinity and Strafford Club caucus was thought to be too powerful ; when Cozens-Hardy and Ripley stood for the October presidency, New College put its last man into the field, and the Russell Club at length secured a brief renewal of ascendancy. The election was marked by huge excitement : a formal inquiry about canvassing was held under the chairmanship of Mr. (now Sir Charles) Oman. Judgment was entered for Ripley without costs."

So far Mr. Coller, who has said little about himself. But he was one of those who did a great deal to hold the Union together. He succeeded G. F. Mortimer of Balliol as librarian, occupying that seat whilst Mortimer and Peel were Presidents. Of Mr. Mortimer, K.C., Recorder of Rotherham, many stories might be told. Returning to the Union in 1894, he made a fine hit in favour of the party of his choice and faith. The Union was discussing the "privileges of the peerage." "The Liberals," said Mr. Mortimer, "might blow their trumpets, but the walls of the House of Lords would *not* fall down. For that purpose there should be more accord in the playing, and each man should not blow his *own* trumpet!"

The Union in fact never lacked a succession of men whose friendly co-operation preserved the society. Security was threatened. But men like Mr. (now Sir) Michael Sadler, later Vice-Chancellor at Leeds, and Master of University, full of enthusiasm for great causes, made as he still makes in the world of education—the kind of music which is much more effective than a trumpet. Sir Halford Mackinder, too, rising into success which, geographically speaking, is fame, often intervened with force in debate. Conservatism in fact, still supported by Mr. Mackinder in parliament, was as strong as it is under Mr. Stanley Baldwin. The feeling that the welfare of the country was at stake, that it might eventually fall into the hands of Liberal adventurers, ever ready to pounce on sacred things and to destroy them, kept the lead in the Union.

Excitement, politically speaking, came to a head on two evenings, February 22 and 29, 1888. "Both sides of the Home Rule Question," a pamphlet, is a full report of the speeches which Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. John Morley delivered then. This was prefaced by the President, Mr. A. J. McGregor of Oriel. Appended to it is a leader with which the Union was honoured by *The Times*. That leader concluded with the words—"Both these statesmen were once members of the Union : but their coming down to make set speeches is a novelty in the history of the society. The only fear is lest the society should be tempted to repeat the indulgence too often ; which, it need hardly be said, would be unfortunate from every point of view."

The Union welcomed the two statesmen heartily. Undergraduate speakers on the first evening were Mr. A. H. Pollen of Trinity and Mr. E. A. Nepean of University. Mr. Tupper-Carey of Christ Church and Mr. F. S. Marvin of St. John's were the first speakers after the adjournment. Mr. W. H. Cozens-Hardy, Mr. Gilbert Murray and Mr. Bertram of New College supported the Home Rule cause. On the other side, Sanders of Balliol found an ally in Magee. Before Lord Randolph Churchill appeared in the house the question was asked—" Was it a fact that Lord Randolph had once been a member of the Union but had been struck off for non-payment of his subscription ? " The answer was in the affirmative, sadly given. Consequently, when the great little man began with a reference to his good fortune whilst at Oxford in belonging to the Union, though he had not taken part in the debates, he was somewhat discomfited by the laughter which followed. This was more than a ripple. But it did not become a roar. It was in the course of this debate, as the Rev. J. R. Greenfield of Wadham remembers, that a member of Keble in his excitement waved a flag. Mr. R. R. Marett of Balliol, a former secretary, now fellow of Exeter, called the President's attention to it. A question was asked. " Was the honourable member in order in waving the Union Jack during these proceedings ? " The answer came promptly from the President. " Sir, the proceedings can be neither helped nor impeded by the actions of the Union Jackass ! "

Mr. G. O. Bellewes of Brasenose served as secretary and as librarian. In the summer term of 1885, he held the presidency with Mr. C. Emmott of Christ Church in the treasurer's seat, and Mr Emmott was President later. The duties of the librarianship during the previous year had been held by Cruickshank of New College. Canon A. H. Cruickshank as a professor and as an author now instructs the youth of Durham with a diligence and charm as great as those which he exercised over several generations of youth at Winchester. And so the roll fills with distinguished names. Some of the difficulties of the Union have already been referred to. But however great the difficulties, plenty of good men were ready to cope with them. It says much for the spirit of the present Archbishop of York, then a member of Balliol, that he brought forward a motion on June 24, 1886, which had many supporters, to the effect that the position of the Union was unsatisfactory. Lord Robert Cecil of University, in 1923 the champion of the League of Nations, was President at the time. The motion was carried by an overwhelming majority—154 to 32. It was a bold step and a successful one. The Union soon went forward again.

The saviour of the Union was the Rev. T. H. Grose of Queen's. He was called in, though after some objections had been raised, to be the first senior treasurer. Mr. Grose certainly did a very sensible thing, quite apart from many actions suggested by his quick and enterprising mind, by going over to Cambridge, to see how they managed things there. "When in doubt, consult Cambridge," is a maxim often followed at Oxford with success. The finances were overhauled. Mr. Grose took up this work in 1888. He laboured incessantly for the society's good until his death in 1906.

"*Viro strenuo, suis carissimo, optime Societate merito.*" So ran the inscription on the present of silver plate given to him by his colleagues in 1904. The memory of Thomas Hodge Grose will always be cherished in his old college, Queen's, as in the Union, which through his efforts could once more look the whole University in the face.

In February, 1890, the University, with the Union, held high festival for Mr. Gladstone, who came down to deliver an address on Homer. By this time prejudices had abated their force everywhere. Even his opponents welcomed the Grand Old Man. Escorted by Sir Henry Acland, and with Mrs. Gladstone at hand to watch over his movements with her never-failing vigilance, the hero of the hour entered the debating hall amidst much cheering. Acknowledging the brief and graceful introduction of the President, Mr. A. G. V. Peel of New College, Mr. Gladstone addressed his audience as "gentlemen and friends." The oration was seasoned, an observer said, with quaint, old-world scholarship. Mr. Gladstone theorized to the effect that every text in Homer had a motive. He drew large conclusions from somewhat shadowy premises, of which the most remarkable was that Homer was acquainted with the Babylonian religion. Archdeacon Edwin Palmer, a trustee of the Union, in moving a vote of thanks, spoke of Mr. Gladstone as " a characteristic Oxford man." To this the veteran statesman replied. He spoke with a wonderful dignity and manliness. Yet he remembered that Oxford had rejected him, and that even most of those present would have wished to defeat him. But he showed no trace of bitterness. " To call a man a characteristic Oxford man," he said, " is to pay him the highest compliment that can be paid to a human being. I fear I do not and cannot accept this." He spoke with arms extended. " One part of it I will accept, and it is this, that apart from any question of opinion, every subject of controversy, there is not a man who has passed through this great and famous University that can say with more truth than I can say, that I love her, I love her, I love her from the bottom of my heart." And then the great gathering dispersed.

The Union still belonged to the young and to the eager. The summer term of 1891 saw a trial of strength for the presidency which created a great stir. The contestants were Mr. J. A. V. Magee of Merton, and Lord Ampthill of New College. Magee had achieved a reputation in the Union second to none. Ampthill was known as a man of conspicuous ability. The whole University looked up to him as President of the University Boat Club. Ampthill won, and he fully deserved his victory ; the narrowness of his opponent's defeat showed also that the Union had tried to balance the chances fairly. Ampthill's presidency was a great success. He represented Oxford at its best, and he was firm and dignified in the Union chair. There were times when firmness was needed. Magee was not, in the end, disappointed. And the Union saw cause for rejoicing in the election of a distinguished Blue.

CHAPTER XV

THE CANVASSING QUESTION IS SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS: A REVIVAL USHERS IN THE TIME OF F. E. SMITH, BELLOC AND SIMON

VERY often in the course of some seventy years of activity the Union had been credited by generous scribes with achieving a golden age. Even young men in their enthusiasm over Oxford would sometimes hesitate to accept this valuation, especially when it was hinted that they might be taking part in creating a fresh record for themselves. In this world facts are presented to the mind by contraries very much as dreams are: but that is a consolation for youth, which is the time for dreams. So, out of some tribulation for the Union good things came. This is not to lay stress on tribulation. Happily, as Mr. Laurence Binyon of Trinity once wrote:

> " A thousand clouds pass from us, but not the sun."

There had been tremors of dissatisfaction in the Union even during the blissful time of Ampthill and Magee, which extended to their posterity, due to causes as natural as those which from time to time disturb the earth's crust and remind the mortal that he is always living on the brink of a volcano. The chief cause of trouble was the vexatious one of canvassing for votes. This had gone through some curious phases since 1873, when Mr. Asquith had been defeated in his first contest for the presidency by Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett. In some subsequent years, canvassing for office had been taken simply as a matter of course. It was not until the Union imposed, after much deliberation, definite rules on the subject, that any moral issue could be said to be involved; and even then it is perhaps important to reduce the whole business to its wholly trivial proportions. Nevertheless the friction was interesting. Based to a large extent on the examples of politicians, as the Union was, canvassing might be called a virtue rather than a crime. Again, if any Oxford man should by chance have accepted the theories prevalent in business, canvassing might be thought a kindred thing to advertising, an excellent device, a splendid opportunity, the criterion of a man's powers in coping with a grossly efficient world. In Oxford, however, efficiency suffers from—or profits by—a certain refinement. The Union, if it sometimes allowed canvassing, always deplored the result. One lesson has been learnt. A rule of uncompromising force forbids the solicitation of votes either by or for a candidate for office, and this is the lineal descendant of other rules on the subject. Thereby hangs a tale, in which, coming forward to 1923, the deeds of 1873 (and after) are reflected. But a crescendo of interest attaches itself to the intervening years, and here there happens to be a half-way house, into which we will now look for a moment, to see how the men of one generation swept and garnished it, and very thoughtfully left their furniture behind.

The half-way house into which we have now penetrated has none of the heart-breaking characteristics of the buildings erected by Mr. Bernard Shaw, perhaps because half-wayness always was a feature of Oxford, where compromises go very well with the *festina lente* policy for which Oxford stands. But in the half-way house, looking round, one descries, in a prominent place, a framed, illuminated rule—a fancy device, of course, but quite in fashion now, for one often meets glazed moral maxims in the homes of one's friends. " If any Member shall, within a week after any election, inform the President in writing that votes have been solicited on behalf of a Candidate, the President shall appoint a Committee of three Ex-Presidents to investigate the charge."

Even in a dream-house, and a half-way house at that, the words confront the gazer obliquely, for they have sometimes turned the Union upside down. Into an earlier chapter, some hints of those disturbances have been allowed to creep. With canvassing permitted, it is obvious that absurdities were bound to grow. In its absence, skill and character had the same chance as such qualities secured—for instance—in a body like the University Boat Club. To abolish canvassing, therefore, was really the only way to play the game, for, to complete the analogy, every man should have been sure, in the Union, of a sportsman's chance in an election. But he did not always get it.

So, as we enter the half-way house, we notice that the past is present. It is even merged in the future. There are strange echoes. "*Vote for Ounce of St. Old's!*" "*Keep out Pounce of St. New's!*" In the dusk of memory such cries are almost startling. Other names are called. Pronouns change places weirdly in this haunted air. Why is that, I wonder? Obviously because the third person singular is a thin disguise and the first person plural is only another makeshift. I will speak for myself. If it were not for the laughter following them, I could not bear these echoes. The air is cool in the half-way house, but my blood boils at the thought that Mr. Asquith's early experience of defeat in the Union was attributed to the lavish nature of his opponent's breakfasts. But still I take comfort from the pictures on the walls. Here are distinguished figures. Prelates and professors, scholars and statesmen are among them. The scenes in which they appear are shadowy, as though, like Rossetti's frescoes, they had been executed in the wrong medium, and then had been hidden by whitewash.

Even as I look, three ex-Presidents come in. They take their seats under these very pictures and proceed to hear evidence in a variety of cases, the composite cases of innumerable years. Intuitions inspire the three judges. They anticipate each word before a witness speaks. Now and again, as if to save appearances and seem impartial, one of the three assumes the part of the *advocatus diaboli*, asking mildly why canvassing is so wrong, why a friend may not speak up for a friend? On this, however, the most critical of the judges, who wears, I notice, not a lawyer's, but an archbishop's robe, is plain and to the point, almost Johnsonian. "We are not here," he says, "to extend the boundaries of the permissible, but to exercise, in case of need, our powers of reprehension." Our chairman, in fact, is profound but not ponderous. Of his colleagues, one is extremely sharp, the other pleasantly patient. In short, a perfect tribunal. They have already heard a certain number of confessions. They have been told by not a few how once upon a time the political parties outside the Union were so strong that the relative strength of one political club alone could decide the elections within the Union as long as that strength lasted. And though all the judges take notes, the chairman rules these points out as mere history and therefore quite irrelevant. Another case presents a very curious aspect, for here the candidate has been accused of getting the billiard-marker to canvass for him, and in fact this is the case on which the committee of three has immediately to report: but the situation which has developed somehow engrosses the judges, and they lose themselves in the exchange of recollections more or less common to one another. They speak with bated breath of one event—how Oxford was smothered in posters urging good Conservatives to rally to the support of a churchman in the Union against a nonconformist. Then it was a joy to know that for this flagrant act of canvassing, though it affected both candidates for the presidency adversely, the enthusiasm of an outsider had been responsible, no member of the Union at all. From this the judges pass: they retail certain eagernesses, largely political, which trespassed beyond rules and rulings, and yet they reflect that eagerness is better than indifference, and with that they fall over one another in enthusiasm for the Union as a centre of Oxford life and hope, with all its limitations, all its failings even. What more is to be said? The judges have finished their job. They have acquitted their man.

To present their report remains. Rising, they nod amiably in my direction and suggest that I should accompany them out of the half-way house into the hall of light, where the house is in session. To us, the ghosts, it is a familiar scene. We ourselves are in the chair, a composite president of all time. The debating-hall is full. There is an emotion stirring, not vague but definite, as we of the past take our places, unseen, on the privileged leathern benches which surround the official seats, and we realize that we too are taking part once more in one of the scenes which recur periodically and mean that the life of the society is at stake. The composite president receives the report which a servant has brought in, smiles as he reads it, and puts it aside, gravely answering a member who has just risen in his place to move a resolution. " Sir, I rise to move the adjournment of the house, to consider the conduct of the standing committee."

This is new. This is audacious. But the President is ready. " The honourable member must have fifteen members to support him." Fourteen members rise. " I think ——" the President begins, when the librarian steps down from his chair in support of the fourteen. Swiftly another figure springs up—" I rise to a point of order. Can the honourable librarian take part in this matter, seeing that he is a member of the standing committee himself?" The President meets this with a disarming smile. " The honourable librarian's quixotic action is quite in order," he rules. " I call upon the honourable member to give reasons for his motion, which is that the house do now adjourn to consider the conduct of the standing committee." Switching his scholar's gown, the complainant strides forward to the secretary's table.

The speaker's tones are clearly modulated but rather bitter. " This motion," he says, " is the natural corollary of the two discussions which have preceded our business of to-night. On the first occasion, the house decided to adjourn in order to consider the conduct of Mr. Ounce of St. Old's. On the second occasion, the house declined to adjourn in order to consider the conduct of Mr. Pounce of St. New's. I am entitled to remind the house of the allegations which were originally made against my friend from St. Old's. It was the honourable member from St. New's who brought the accusation forward. It amounted to this—that, not content with furthering a system of canvassing, my friend had combined to persuade individuals who were not completely qualified, to record votes in favour of certain candidates, thus performing, by a trick, a manifest disservice to this society. By its vote it is clear that the house considered this allegation to have been proved; and when, on the second occasion, those who resented this decision, and the accusers of my honourable friend were attacked in their turn by a second motion for adjournment, the house, by refusing that motion, fastened the accusation more completely than ever on my honourable friend from St. Old's. Sir, this is a state of affairs which cannot be tolerated. The whole of the discontent that has arisen is due to the rules against canvassing which I now propose should be abolished once for all, and in order to raise the whole question I move the adjournment of the house to consider the action of the standing committee in permitting a personal attack on an honourable member of the society to be brought forward."

The President rises. "The honourable member is not in order," he rules, and there is a ground swell of applause. Tempers are rising. The atmosphere is electric. My ghostly companions feel this. "It is the old passion," they whisper. "We felt as bitter, sometimes, on the Sunday question."

"I have permitted the honourable member considerable latitude," the President proceeds. "The house has heard certain facts recited, and certain names have been mentioned, but with last week's decision, not to adjourn, the questions in which two honourable members had been involved were settled, it may be hoped, for ever."

At these words, the assembly breaks into loud applause.

" The honourable member is still in possession of the house," the President adds, " but I must point out that discussion of the canvassing rules cannot be permitted at this stage, and the method by which the motion has been supported is entirely irregular."

" Nevertheless," continues the indomitable fighter below, with a twinkle in his eye which shows how he is enjoying himself, " I shall continue to enlighten the house on the subject of canvassing."

" The honourable member is out of order." But the speaker turns elaborately to the dais.

" Canvassing, sir——" he proceeds.

" The honourable member is fined One Pound," announces the President, sure of his rights, firm on the rules.

Is the contest over ? Not quite. The applause of hundreds is some relief to the tension so rapidly rising. At this, our orator wavers. He has tested the patience of all present, but he is glad of that. His smile is an odd one. It conveys the idea of satisfaction gained. He leaves the table, and before the applause has subsided he has reached the door. Dramatically, he pauses there. Like Tait of old, he brandishes his cap and announces that he will appeal against the fine. In the hush that ensues, the President descends from the chair to address the house.

" I have an announcement to make," he says, and we who are silent observe his motions, follow his mood. " The composite president," we whisper. And so he is. He has Balliol in his heart and Wadham in his eye. His knowledge of the rules comes from Hertford, his histrionic power springs from Pembroke, his gait is of Magdalen, Trinity may take credit for his dignity, Christ Church and New College for his easy control of the situation. Swedenborg showed that man was a microcosm of the universe. Here are all the colleges in one man, who now interprets all the motions of the Union mind, looking forward to the future and away from the past.

" I hold in my hand," he explains, " a report from three ex-Presidents, relative to a question which was recently referred to them. I do not propose to read the document to the house. It is enough for me to say that the officer of the society who was accused has been completely exonerated. (Loud applause.) I think that is very satisfactory. Before proceeding to public business, therefore, I desire to move the thanks of the society to the ex-Presidents for the assurance they have given, and in so doing I would express the hope that henceforward the canvassing laws may be sustained without difficulty as a necessary part of this society's equipment."

A voice is heard : " I desire to be allowed to second that vote of thanks."

All eyes are turned to the cross-benches, whence this voice proceeds.

The new speaker is recognized as a recent ex-President. He has the bearing of a man of the world, and reminds us of the time when Oxford men were keen to establish the Union as a school of public manners. Heredity shows in his eyes and in his voice. Such is the force of tradition. Is he not the descendant of a famous Prime Minister ? To him, example and practice in the Union are matters of real moment. He would never subscribe to the theory of Froude that " oratory is the harlot of the arts." Rather, he would set against that sorry epigram the magic of persuasive human speech and its timeless, immeasurable power. But it is in the present pleader's mind simply to counsel and to warn. Seventy years lie behind. But more than seventy years lie before, and the Union must look to its laurels.

" I hope," he says, " that the time will never come when the Oxford Union will have cause to be ashamed of itself. Oxford is widely scattered in the world. The eyes of many older men are on the present generation. Rumour reaches London, and from London I come to track these rumours down. We, who care for the Union, wish to know what is really happening. The Union has always had its heart in politics, but not its whole heart. Ideals, not the intrigues of statecraft, are the true business of this society. It will therefore be a thousand pities if anything but fair play should ever rule in this place. I have followed these proceedings with some pain. Canvassing may serve elsewhere: but this is the field of merit and of even chances. Let it be made clear, once for all, that the Union is against undue influence and chicanery of every kind. Let the lessons shown in the portraits around these walls be taken to heart, for these are true representations, at its very best, of academic influence on the world at large. I am honestly glad, in spite of what I have said, to second this vote of thanks. It is obvious that there have been troubles within the society to which the report of the judges does not refer, and I feel, after what has passed, that we may efface these things from our minds in the absence of the honourable member who brought them to our notice. His negative zeal, it seemed to me, was only equalled by his positive indiscretion. (Laughter and some applause.) Besides, a suitable reproof has already been administered. (Louder applause.) But, sir, the Union needs no cautions from the over-serious. Still less will it tolerate any flippant or contemptuous infringement of its rights, any foolish underrating of its aims, for these have been high and honourable from the beginning. I support this vote and all that it implies, because thereby we close a chapter which should never have been opened, and now we must look for a renewal of those traditions which have made our society famous, and for a re-assertion of that zeal for truth which will in the end carry all before it."

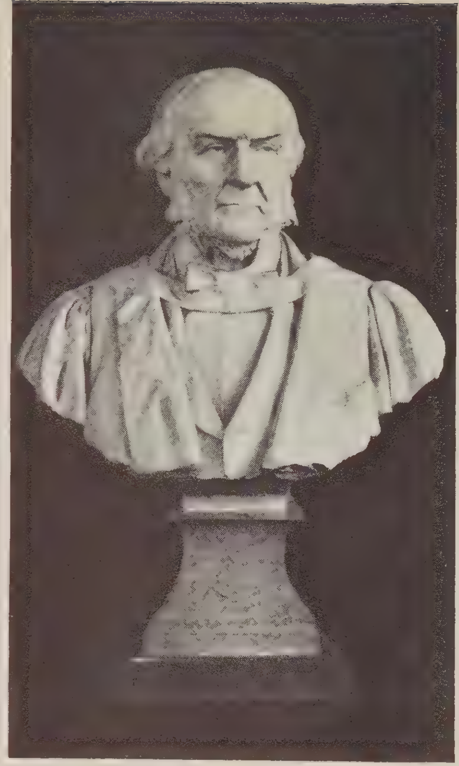
To ringing applause the President rises once more. He puts the resolution of thanks, which is unanimously accepted, then, with a gesture that hushes the cheers, he takes a notice-board into his hands. But another member stands up.

" To a point of order, sir. May I inquire what has happened to the motion of adjournment which was brought before the house ? "

" *Erupit,* sir, *evasit !* " replies the President promptly. " The honourable member's withdrawal of his own body was withdrawal of the body of the motion. That is my ruling. I am indebted to the honourable member who has raised the fresh point, but any further question will involve a substantial fine. That is my ruling also. I may remind the society that under Rule 50, my decision cannot be questioned or discussed during the meeting at which it is given, and, moreover, it is exactly half-past nine. The house will now proceed to public business, and I would ask all honourable members to remain in their places and give their kind attention to the debate : ' That in the opinion of this house, the University of Oxford does not encourage the most desirable studies.' "

It is the discretion, the tact of the President, which have brought relief to a difficult situation. My companions on the bench of privilege discern this as I do. For a moment they have nearly glowed into life at the unanimous vote of thanks. But not quite. They have vanished. I myself, a living ex-President, am left alone. And so, following these composite examples, full of recollection, I enter the living Union once more.

" Does Oxford encourage the most desirable studies ? " It was Mr. J. L. S. Hatton of Hertford, I remember, who issued that challenge, and it was I myself who opposed him. The year does not matter. Chronology is a snare, and the fluctuating Union was always discussing these things. So this debate may serve as typical. It happened that Mr. Hatton, whose subsequent career has shown a real devotion



The Right Honourable
WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE,
Secretary, 1830. President, 1830.
(By E. Onslow Ford, R.A.)

The Most Honourable
ROBERT, THIRD MARQUIS OF SALISBURY,
Chancellor of the University.
Secretary, 1848. Treasurer, 1849.
(By Sir George Frampton, R.A.)

The Right Honourable
HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH,
Treasurer, 1872. President, 1874.
(By Mrs. Claire Sheridan.)

THREE PRIME MINISTERS.

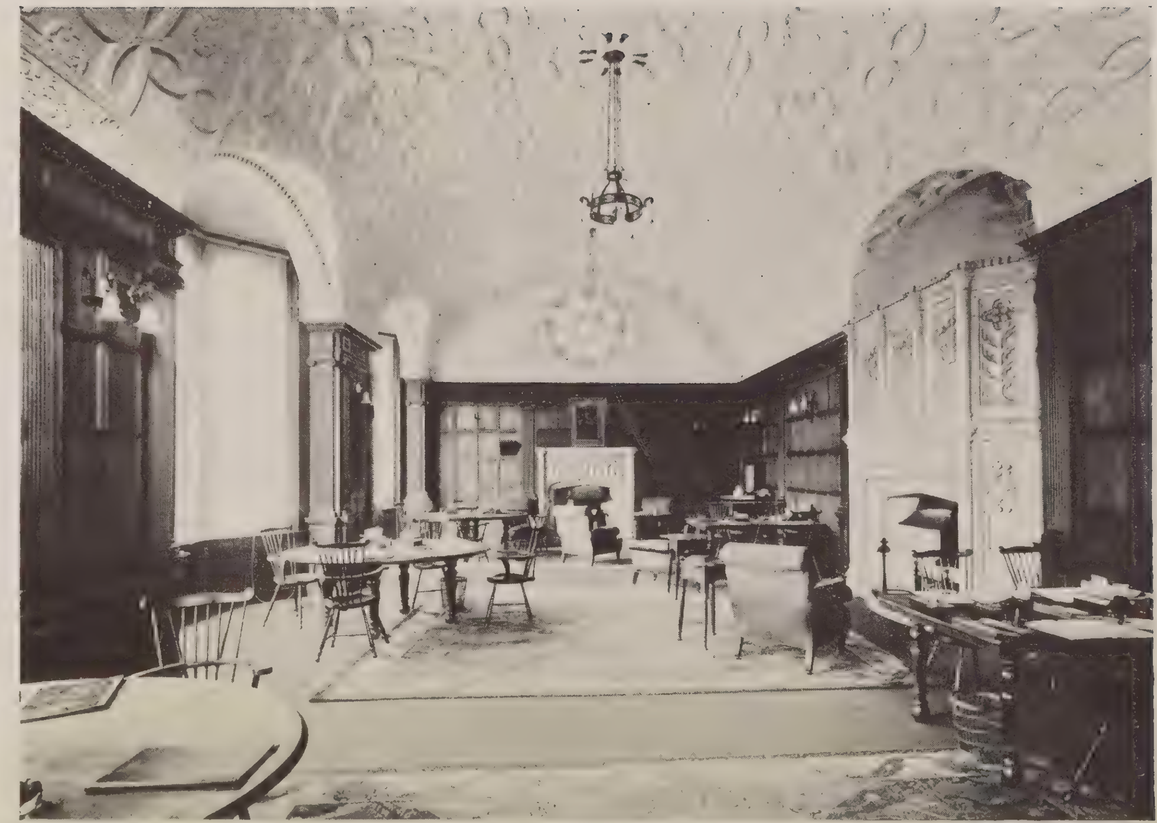


Photo: Hills & Saunders.

THE NEW WRITING-ROOM, 1911.

to education and literature, was speaking up for reforming the academic course, and I, heart and soul with him in that idea, had nevertheless to show the excellence of things as they were. Many things in Oxford were excellent indeed, so that the task was an easy one, and by the help of other speakers, the motion was easily defeated. But amongst other names, and other motions, which might be chosen, Hatton's proposition stands out as recalling the whole period out of which fresh memories of men are waiting to be summoned. When Hatton was serving on the library committee, Archibald Ripley of Trinity held the presidency. Ripley alone was a tower of strength to the Union because he never gave himself any airs of super-excellence. It might be said that he felt highly amused at the luck which put him in the seat of honour. Death claimed him early, to the regret of his innumerable friends. A fine impression of his personal charm, his racy humour, has survived in the memoirs of another man of strong individuality, the artist George Calderon, who shared Ripley's life and fortunes.

There is something very striking in the composition of the successive committees responsible at this time for running the Union. In the work of the library, Professor York Powell continued to advise, whilst Walter Pater entered with keen sympathy into the fascinating business of sifting chaff from grain. Many librarians in succession could testify to York Powell's interest and devotion, though he nearly missed his highest professorial appointment because the Prime Minister's letter with the offer was left unopened behind the clock, placed there by his scout amongst unpaid bills and other communications of no immediate importance. Hence the theory spread that in his habits York Powell was unmethodical. But the Union committee meetings had all his attention. As for Pater, he held a great place in Oxford, and his name lives on, not least in the Union library which was partially his care. Books, indeed, sometimes brought excitement in these years.

There was a mighty struggle over the admission of the works of Emile Zola *en masse.* All the moralists were up in arms against this proposal, which was defeated ostensibly on the ground that the library was not particularly strong in French literature, for compromise affected the judgment of many and some thought it wise to adopt a hedging line on a very thorny subject. As matters stood, the books could be added without any general discussion, one by one. Toleration in the Union had certainly grown since Ouida had been rejected in " Tricotrin " and Rhoda Broughton's " Nancy " had come under the ban. But Zola in bulk, and in English, certainly caused a sensation at a time when the law, unable to suppress an author, was ready to imprison his translator.

Here, then, the society reflected a general interest and brought men of character forward to intensify the mutual life. Election to the management of the Union continued to attract individuals of varying talent. Under Ripley, Percival Landon of Hertford, whose brilliant work as a special correspondent is well known, became a leader conspicuous for virile performances in debate. During the same epoch H. E. A. Cotton of Jesus created, even for Oxford, a rare impression of that kind of Radicalism which seemed to be inspired. The name of Cotton is a reminder of the similar gifts of his brother Julian of Corpus, and of many an evening in the Union when Indian affairs came to the front. The junior treasurership was held in 1894 by W. K. Stride of Exeter, now Rector of Besselsleigh, and no more efficient man has ever filled the office. Mr. C. D. Benham of New College, who ventured into fiction with a novel of some power, " The Fourth Napoleon," was also a valued member of the standing committee.

To these names must be added one whose adventures in the Boer War were made the subject of an entertaining and instructive book. Like his brothers, the Hon. S. C. Peel of New College was a clever and unconventional speaker at the Union, and since that time he has brought many gifts to the public service. A certain stimulus for the society, again, was provided by Mr. Bertram Christian of Lincoln, a speaker of uncommon capacity, whose labours have touched that side of publicity in which Oxford has sometimes been deficient—the practical, business side of the world of books. Through such men the beginnings of active life were steeped in encouragement. For these were still the days of the " bijou Boanerges," Arthur Magee. And was not G. W. E. von Zedlitz of Clifton and Trinity electrifying us all, despite his Teutonic origin, with speeches of real power ? Speeches apart, the effectiveness of Claude Eliot of Merton, the buoyancy of Robert Phillimore of Christ Church, remain in memory still, as though, with the encirclement of their companions added, these various " incarnations of the Union " could once again be brought to life. And so, indeed, they may be.

Magee, Phillimore, Eliot. They are all associated in my mind with the Union at its best. They might be called presidents of the rank and file. Of Magee's struggle with Ampthill for the presidency something has already been said. He was defeated. Later, he came into his own at the Union. He was elected unopposed, and out of this consolation emerged the happier man who had almost been unmanned by his defeat. It may seem absurd, but facts are facts, and Magee lived for the Union to an extent which few before his time, fewer still after, could possibly achieve. Hereditary bias is an attractive thing to observe. Magee, as a speaker, was a creature all on wires, as his father, the famous archbishop, was not. But he was a chip of the old block, all the same. Magee's gifts were those of the natural orator. He started his Union career in 1887 and this lasted till 1892. He took his place naturally as a champion of established churches. English or Welsh, he was always to the front when a defence-movement needed him. In 1887, one of the occupants of the presidential chair was C. A. H. Green of Keble—now

Bishop of Monmouth—and the conditions under which that exalted position is now filled were clearly foreshadowed in debate when Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen of Queen's, Lord Hugh Cecil of University, Dr. A. J. Carlyle and other able speakers were determined opponents of ecclesiastical change.

Magee's first speech in the Union was delivered under the presidency of H. M. Godfray of Exeter against the expediency of suicide. This was followed up by a defence of capitalism on which Mr. Gilbert Murray, then of St. John's, took the other side. Magee held a brief soon after this in favour of cremation, when the house made up its mind that it would like to be cremated. Magee found himself in the midst of a very active group. H. B. Irving of New College frequently and thoughtfully took part in debate. Men would watch his movements and note the actor in them, but he also revealed his love of legal lore by early advocacy of a Court of Criminal Appeal, then unknown.

Others who surrounded Magee included Percy Dearmer of Christchurch, now Doctor of Divinity and professor at King's College, London ; the Hon. W. W. Gibson of Merton (now Lord Ashbourne), an original speaker on Irish themes ; J. H. Peachey of Queen's, who performed yeoman service in the library ; J. Fischer Williams of New College, who held the secretaryship, but retired all too soon from active participation in Union affairs. Then E. K. Chambers of Corpus made much of literary interests, whilst Edwin James Palmer of Balliol, now Bishop of Bombay, was an assiduous member of the committee, who brought into his too infrequent speeches the mild political methods of the Palmerston Club.

Receptive, generous, sometimes critical, the rank and file attended the debates, it must be confessed, rather capriciously. Except when canvassing caused friction, disturbances seldom happened. Some patient individuals lived for the Union in silence much as Magee lived for it in speech. Many a president would have felt quite uncomfortable if the elongated form of

Mr. L. A. Toke of Balliol had not been in his accustomed place down on the floor a little to the right of the chair. Sometimes an eccentric or a man captious and critical would put in an appearance. The figure of Maxse of St. John's in evening dress and the most magnificent of fur-coats appears, a truly gorgeous apparition; then a Bellew is reincarnated from another college, with strings of adjectives, alliterations, apostrophes; and of course there is an aggressive man with very red hair and a very scarlet tie in each generation. It was in Sir Michael Sadler's time that the question was asked by such a man of the President—" Sir, why is a little dog permitted on the floor of the house ? " The President—" I see no little dog."—" Will you look again, sir ? " The President slowly makes search in the wrong direction while the intruder is hustled out in ignominy. Solemnly the President speaks, once the laughter has died away. " The honourable member is mistaken. There is no little dog. I assume that the creature has fled from the truly terrifying appearance of the honourable member from Balliol." Such trifling diversions also lightened the labours of another President, as when Zedlitz of Trinity, having inquired if any part of the house was in order for questions and receiving an affirmative, appeared a hundred feet away over the clock in the gallery and trumpeted forth a series of questions from there, till forced to stop by the official command : —" The house will now proceed to public business."

These humours were always much appreciated by the rank and file, which too often flocked out when the fun was over, and this certainly went to the heart of a man like Magee, as, with a few others, he tried hard to set the more serious life flowing freshly in the Union. The best performances of the past had little concern with mere numbers. The Union did not lack numbers under Magee. The buildings were adequate. And yet, by the end of 1892, it was clear that something was lacking, and when R. C. Phillimore of Christ

Church came into office he certainly assumed for a time the mantle of Magee, who in relation to the Union was a thorough-going idealist. Between Magee and Phillimore came one who had served the library with great ability and assiduity, J. F. W. Galbraith of Oriel, now one of His Majesty's counsel learned in the law and M.P. for the Sutton division of Surrey. Galbraith did not fail to help private business through with his quiet humour. Asked on one occasion if it was his official duty to be late, he replied gently in the negative. " But," he added, " to be late is my pleasure." Howard Liversidge of Hertford, the one President of our day who knew the rules backwards, would probably have gone one better than that, for a rule empowers the President to decide when term begins and ends, and surely it must follow that the hours of the clock must be accommodated to his convenience as well. When the Hon. R. C. Phillimore (to give him for once his fuller and later designation) took his seat in the chair, the house welcomed an idealist as keen as any before him, one of those breezy, unconventional people whom it was a joy to know. He posed as a hater of respectability. Very early in his career he adopted certain theories of Socialism. It caused vast amusement to his friends when he first stood for Parliament that he should be escorted half way to the poll by retainers of the castle of Alnwick : and here it may be noted, in parenthesis, that Warkworth, later Earl Percy, was then his host.

Warkworth was himself a brilliant speaker. In him, if in anyone, the charm of the earliest founders of the Union was revived. I see him now, rising from one of the side benches, enunciating Conservative doctrine touched with philosophy, and whilst he uses the language worthy of a sound classical scholar, he quaintly emphasizes the fact that both his grandfathers happen to be dukes : one the Duke of Northumberland, the other the Duke of Argyll. In another debate, I hear Warkworth declaiming against the inconsistencies of all Liberals, and of Mr. Gladstone in particular, and I follow his apostrophe with admiration simply because he knows how poetry should be spoken. To the minds of some of us he may be wrong, but it is something to hear the words of Tennyson adequately declaimed :—

> " A still, strong man, in a blatant land,
> Who can rule and dare not lie ! "

Like many another of the finer intellects and characters which Oxford cherished, Warkworth did not live to take the highest places in politics which seemed to be reserved for him. In the Union, he never would stand for office. This is worthy of comment. He felt, I think, with others of similar training and capacity, that he had too great a " pull." But the Union was the loser.

I now remember how a motion, critical but in truth commendatory, started an informal inquiry into the affairs of the Union. Magee might have inspired it, but in fact he did not. Its true father was Robert Phillimore, and Claude Eliot also comes into the story, one who in later days was known all over North London as the " Smiling Parson." Eliot, by the way, devoted much time as treasurer to the affairs of the Union. He succeeded Phillimore as President. He had the Union in his blood because he was the nephew of Dean Philip Eliot of Windsor, a President of 1857. Beyond this, Claude Eliot's was a temperament of truest refinement, of calm, of a gentle sincerity and moderation, qualities which made him in Oxford and elsewhere a universal favourite. Thus he was an asset of great value to the Union, but when in his " low-browed rooms " at Christ Church, with Eliot present, the general prospects of the society came under discussion, it was Phillimore who always took the most critical line, and somehow or other it came into his mind that instead of being feebly treated in any hole-and-corner fashion, the subject should be brought forward in public debate. Phillimore did not even consult me about the wording of the motion. He put me down for it. To hear was to obey. Consequently, on October 25th, 1892, I moved :—" That this Society views its present position with regret, and its future with apprehension."

Two men held the honours in this debate, Eliot and Dyson Williams of Corpus. Mr. A. Dyson Williams, an ex-President distinguished in public service, had been forced, from ill-health, to retire, and so he returned to Oxford. In the Union his mark had been made with men like Sir William Worsley of New College, or J. S. G. Pemberton, long a successful member of Parliament ; with J. A. Hamilton of Balliol (Lord Sumner), with Hastings Rashdall (Dean of Carlisle), with John Sargeaunt—the well-loved and well-remembered author of " Annals of Westminster School." The roll of eminent men might indefinitely be extended.

Within a year of the passing of the motion (inspired by Phillimore) the present Earl of Crawford and Balcarres sent me a card commenting very happily on a new situation. In Balcarres of Magdalen, the society had a treasurer as keen as his predecessors, and in due course he was elected President without opposition. In him Magdalen gave to the Union its first President for 23 years, and to him fell the uncommon duty of proceeding to Padua in the Union's name. This he achieved most admirably with his fluent Italian, an uncommon acquisition in an Oxford man. Adding to his dignity for this occasion he assumed a scholar's gown. To men like him the Union owed a great deal, and the days became rich with fresh felicities. The names of Frederic Edwin Smith and of Hilaire Belloc wrought an entirely new feeling in the Union, and before very long they were reinforced by John Allsebrook Simon. From these three men the Union imbibed fresh strength, which lasted for many years. There were others who brought capacity in, sending it broadcast through Oxford, and the Union was conscious of the fact that a golden age had dawned once more.

The name of Belloc is echoed in memory, fantastically, with the name of Zedlitz of Trinity, whose convictions were German, though he had assimilated English ways. Belloc, of course, was divided from such a man in every sense, and yet on one principle these two foes were agreed. A common cause Zedlitz and Belloc could never make with one another, but both held the fighting instinct to be part of the soul of man. Zedlitz yearned for the issues between Germany and France to be tested again. He would fight them out with joy. At the Union Zedlitz spoke well, though often perversely. In one original effort he declaimed against the erection of a statue to John Henry Newman in Oxford. He cited the cardinal himself as an apostle of intoleration. He was wrong, but the debate kept excitement humming for weeks. So far as Oxford was concerned, Zedlitz faded away. Rumour says that he lived to drive a cab, but also, at last, that he guided affairs of importance in his own misguided fatherland. Who knows? He may still be busy in some Gilbertian fashion, counting paper marks in Berlin or discounting them in Amsterdam. The Union of to-day will not wish, for Zedlitz, anything " with boiling oil in it," but it is something to remember that in Hilaire Belloc of Balliol he more than met his match.

The Belloc of those days was a Liberal. Amongst several varieties of Liberals he showed a difference, largely because there was in him the germ of creative power—a term not to be used lightly, but certainly applicable to the author of " The Path to Rome." It was not only on foreign matters that Belloc let himself go. Concerning the admission of Zola's novels *en bloc*, he had something to say, and this stirred a few people outside Oxford, like G. A. Sala, who offered to supply a set of Zola's books in Romaic, which he declared was as good as any ancient Greek for members of a University. When Belloc became librarian of the Union, his varied knowledge, far greater than that of the ordinary undergraduate, distinguished him even as his speaking did, and on his speaking Lord Birkenhead has expressed an opinion both judicious and judicial. In "Points of View," published in 1922, Lord Birkenhead has written: "Mr. Belloc was undoubtedly a great orator. At Oxford he spoke out of the sincerity of his heart in noble English, and out of a fund of natural genius. . . . At the Union he was an immense and unparalleled success. I can bear testimony to this, because I opposed Mr. Belloc on nearly all his great occasions."

Long after his tenure of office in the Union, Hilaire Belloc could be relied upon to bring his unrivalled abilities into play, *pour encourager les autres*, and so he has continued from year to year to stimulate the Union mind.

One thing is clear. If Liberalism had its champions, real strength in speaking was often found on the other side of the house. Nor can it be denied that the prevalent opinion favoured the Conservative view. But Conservatives claim, after all, to be the true friends of progress. When Mr. F. E. Smith of Wadham first took part in the debates he showed at any rate an unconventional mind. He brought forward and carried a motion against the political system of canvassing. It is interesting to discern how the reforming spirit moved in one whose zeal has already made history. This is not to differentiate the spheres of politics and the law. Literature, the Bar, politics, it has been said, are joint fields of action for Oxford men. There was, all this while, even though men's opinions might nearly be stabilized by their bent or by their reading, an experimental air about everything and everybody. The Union really tried to get at the truth concerning rival proposals in politics. Here, like Hilaire Belloc, the redoubtable "F. E." provided many a chance, by the exercise of his equally rare ability, for men of an enquiring turn of mind to weigh one thing against another. And by experiments on their hearers some speakers certainly formed a style.

For the Oxford Union style in speaking, it has been said that the historian Gibbon is in part responsible. Certainly the tendency towards epigram, and again towards antithesis, must have a model somewhere. Cambridge men have been known to express disappointment when visiting the Oxford Union, if Oxford epigrams have failed to flow. Now, they flow so easily from Mr. J. D. Woodruff of New College that he is known, politically, as "the Liberal quip."

The misdoings of Liberals, and of one Liberal in particular, were an inexhaustible theme from 1880 onwards. In a motion dealing with the Government of the day—it was in the autumn of 1893—Mr. Gladstone had come in for particular attention once more. In days of political excitement, opinion on this illustrious statesman ranged between extremes of abuse and adulation. Once a member of the Union—could it have been F. R. C. Bruce of Worcester ?—referred to Mr. Gladstone as "that garrulous old mountebank." Uproar was the result. A Conservative member was in the chair, a man of great ability and infinite discretion. A member rose to ask if this expression was in order. The President, after a moment's hesitation, answered. There was a hush in the debating-hall as he said that in the noise which had begun before the honourable member had completed his sentence he really had been unable to hear what had been said.

On many occasions did Mr. F. E. Smith play with the weaknesses of his opponents and with all impracticable and visionary parties. Here is an expression which has survived from one of his speeches :—"If the Turk treated with disdain the menaces of Lord Salisbury with all the Powers at his back, who would be intimidated by the belligerent fury of the members of the Peace Society ? " But it was not only as a political critic, with an inexhaustible power of pungent expression, that speeches like this were made. F. E. Smith was a speaker who could unbend and take his full share both in the administrative work of the Union and in the lighter business which brought men together week by week to exercise themselves in the art of repartee. He was an athlete also, playing vigorously for his college, who would, but for an accident, have achieved the honours of a Blue. In fact, he had a great variety of interests, and here comes a reminder of his devotion to dogs (and also to the Union) in the form of a little story narrated by a member from Worcester, once secretary of the Union and who now, as Dr. Rosslyn Bruce, guides the spiritual destinies of Hurstmonceux in Sussex. On several occasions, contrary to all laws, " F. E. " had persisted in bringing his Irish terrier into the Union grounds, and he was repeatedly heckled in private business on the subject. " With a certain irritation born of conscious guilt, he had tried to spiflicate the troublesome questioner with this cold, dry comment—that, ' the joke, if joke it be, is very stale, and even when fresh, was never A1.' ' Surely, Sir,' responded the irrepressible trifler (Bruce himself), ' the joke could hardly be A1, when it is quite obviously K9.' . . . Even after thirty years, it rankles a little with the perpetrator of this verbal atrocity that he and Mr. Smith were (quite falsely) accused of collusion. It was probably one of the few occasions in his whole career that the ex-Lord Chancellor had not the last word."

Wadham next brought into the Union a scholar of the highest distinction in the person of Mr. J. A. Simon. With an intensity of feeling, with a logic which could never be gainsaid, with a clarity of expression and with an abundant humour, Simon always advocated the theory and the practice of Liberalism with a sincerity and an ingenuity worthy of Mr. Gladstone himself. Like most of those who made the greatest mark in the presidency of the Union, he served his apprenticeship in the office of junior treasurer. As an indication of his attitude to matters outside the ordinary range of politics he came forward now in favour of granting degrees to women. In questions such as those involving privilege, Simon was always at his best. He had, of course, an hereditary bias in favour of setting religion free, whether in England or in Wales, but on the latter point he would declare with conspicuous moderation that hostility to the establishment was not hostility to the Church. On the eternal question of the House of Lords he once indulged in a grave review of the doings of that body, tracing its history for generations. Touching this same subject with humour, he showed how the House of Lords had been likened to a brake, a safety-valve, but, he pointed out, the brake only acted when the machine was going forward, never when it went backward or down hill. How was that ? The safety-valve was prevented from working by Lord Salisbury sitting on it, a position neither dignified nor safe. On another occasion, when the subject before the house was educational, and Boyd-Carpenter of Balliol had pleaded for his children and for their religious education, Simon invited him to bring his children forward, a suggestion which of course produced a laugh, but the laughter was doubled when with affected indignation Simon demanded furthermore that the appellant should " produce his burning parents."

There were other humours in these and later days, Not the least were provided by Mr. F. Ingle of St. John's, and indeed there never was a time when the Union proceedings were without some diverting power. Perhaps one of the best sallies of the unconscious type was made by the member who declared with vehemence :—" Sir, honourable members opposite may say what they like, but we shall face the country with the country at our back ! " Another effort came from a member who declared that :—" The eagle of culture, waving its talons wildly over its head, soars into the blue empyrean. Dashed down from thence, it sails through the fathomless ocean and finally emerges in the haven where it would be."

But here I am fortunate enough to be able to drop my pen for a few moments whilst Sir John Simon spares a little of his valuable time to give an account of the Union as he knew it.

Sir John Simon writes :—

" My first experience of the Union was in the spring or summer of 1893, when as a freshman I listened (from the gallery, I think, for I did not join the Union till the following year) to a most amusing duel between F. E. Smith and Hilaire Belloc who at that time were shaping to become rivals for the presidential chair. Smith astutely arranged that Belloc should begin, and Belloc proposed a motion to the effect that the house 'would welcome any scheme for associating undergraduates with the government of the University.' He made an interesting and unconventional speech, with bursts of eloquence, bringing in references to Universities abroad, and including a Latin quotation pronounced in the Continental manner. Then came Smith's turn, and I have often thought since, when I have listened to him in the House of Commons and sometimes prepared to reply to him, how much of the smartness of repartee he then disclosed survive in his later oratorical flights. He called attention to the words of the motion, which declared that the house would welcome *any* scheme ; and then, with cool assurance, produced his own scheme and declared that nobody could vote for the motion who didn't accept his precise plan. He described the qualities needed in a vice-chancellor, from which it soon appeared that Belloc was cast for the part ; and I recall a characteristic passage —'and then we must have a Hebdomadal Council—well, what could be more suitable than the Library Committee ; it will give its members something to do !' Belloc's Latin quotation was mercilessly parodied ; there was no gainsaying the success of the performance ; Smith was triumphantly elected President in due course, while Belloc succeeded to the chair two terms later.

" My own earliest opportunities came when Liversidge (who now represents the British Government before the Anglo-German Tribunal) was President. I hadn't spoken at the Union before, but he kindly asked me to second the motion proposed by J. L. Hammond, 'That this House sympathizes with the miners in the coal strike.' We used to prepare our speeches carefully in those days. F. E. Smith certainly did so, for he and I lived on the same staircase in Wadham and I used to hear him marching up and down his room in elaborate rehearsal. I can well recall a purple patch in my own first speech—something about the balance of profit and loss, and the scales of right and wrong.

"I was junior treasurer for two terms, with P. J. Macdonell (now a lawyer in South Africa) and J. S. Phillimore (now the Glasgow Professor) as my presidential chiefs, and in the spring term of 1896 I was President. Perhaps the best way of conveying an impression of the Union in my time is to recall some of the speakers and subjects in my presidential term. We led off with a motion in favour of an alliance between England and France, moved by Malcolm Seton—he was then one of the three forwards in the Oriel XV who were between six and seven feet high, and he is now, of course, one of the principal officials of the India Office. Then Morrah proposed and carried a motion, 'That Lord Salisbury has been unwise in reviving the Laureateship,'—he quoted copiously from the works, authorized or apocryphal, of Alfred Austin. Arnold Ward failed to carry his resolution 'That the existence of the British South Africa Company is inimical to the best interests of the Empire,' though he was supported by J. S. Bradbury. There was a very close division on the motion backed by the cheerful advocacy of the present Lord Donoughmore, 'That this House would view with horror the prospects of a teetotal England.'

"The great occasion of the term was the visit of Mr. Asquith, who had not been back to the Union since his own presidency twenty-two years before. The motion dealt with the agitation in favour of voluntary schools, the financial difficulties of which were, at that time, the subject of much heated controversy. Many of his contemporaries came to hear him, and one or two who remembered his undergraduate speaking, told me afterwards that his voice and phrasing were exactly what they recalled nearly a quarter of a century back. Archie Boyd-Carpenter, who succeeded me in the presidency, made a most effective speech from the point of view of a good Churchman, and a recent ex-President, Lord Beauchamp, took the same side.

" This leads me to an observation on the subject of the invitations which the Union President sometimes extends to visitors to address the society. In my time this was a very unusual practice. John Morley and Randolph Churchill had come down on successive Thursdays in the great Home Rule debate a few years before ; and there had been an echo of this in the subsequent visit of Mr. John Dillon and Colonel Saunderson. I am strongly of the opinion that the practice of inviting seniors to speak at the Union is easily overdone. Every President is tempted to associate his term of office with some such event if he can, and when the visitor is a statesman of first-rate eminence, the occasion is likely to be a memorable one ; but it seems to me that too many outsiders have been asked in recent years, and in the interest of the Union, the occasions should be limited and the individual carefully chosen from a very small list. Otherwise, the Union throws away its opportunities of paying a real compliment to a distinguished man, and the result is that really distinguished men will not regard it as a compliment to be asked.

" Two other debates of my presidential term are worth recalling. One was a motion proposed by my Wadham contemporary and life-long friend, F. W. Hirst, ' That the time is come for the substitution of Arbitration for War as a means of settling International disputes.' Belloc opposed this motion and it was defeated by more than two to one.

The other occasion I like to recall was the visit of officers from the Cambridge Union. The motion was in favour of the admission of women to Oxford and Cambridge degrees; Blomfield Jackson (now a distinguished Civil Servant in India) moved it, and our Cambridge visitors were Charles Buxton (now the Labour Member for Mid-Devon), P. W. Wilson (whose initials have since appeared in much political writing) and F. W. Lawrence, who was then known as a Smith's Prizeman and likely to become a Fellow of Trinity, but who was destined under his later name of Pethick Lawrence to be identified with vigorous fighting for many causes. Our Cambridge visitors did not all speak on the same side, but wild horses will not make me reveal who was against the motion. The women were heavily defeated, though as an ex-President, two years later, I rather think I helped to turn the tables.

"The Union has its ups and downs, and does not at any time lack critics who belittle its performances. But it is a great institution nevertheless, to which many of us owe much. There is a great deal to be learnt in trying to persuade that fastidious audience and there are friendships to be made with the fiercest of your opponents which will last through life. One of the best things about the Union is that it gives the man from a small college, who may otherwise move in a limited circle, the opportunity of matching himself against the best of his contemporaries, and the thrust and parry of the debating hall are the finest preparations for more serious controversies afterwards. The Union is a field in which all comers are welcome and I never saw any success gained there by other than open and honourable means. In my day the Liberals were in a minority, though this did not prevent us from getting our full share of election to office. And office-holding at the Union is a very useful experience: the junior treasurer has the management of a larger income than he is likely to acquire, at any rate for many years to come, and is responsible for a big staff of servants; the librarian has charge of one of the best general libraries in Oxford, and has no light task when he 'brings forward his weekly list of books,' and in his heart of hearts every President takes more satisfaction in inheriting the traditions of the chair, than in most things that happen to him in these three or four unforgettable years.

"In every Oxford generation there are some superior individuals who affect to despise the Union and refuse to belong to it. They make, I think, a great mistake, for it is one of the representative institutions of undergraduate life, in which everyone may get something of interest and value by taking his share."

In these years we were on more than one occasion guests of the Birmingham and Edgbaston Debating Society, when Mr. E. Bickerton Williams presided over the proceedings. Foreign universities were also visited. A notable excursion was that of Bradbury, with Crowfoot and Sargent of Brasenose and Boyd-Carpenter of Balliol, to Brussels in 1895. Here the future G.C.B. (of Treasury fame) carried a banner emblazoned with the Union device. The incident was noticed in the London press. Could Oxford men carry trumpery banners in tawdry processions? John Bradbury wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette*: "As the invited guests of a foreign university we were bound to adapt ourselves to the customs prevailing there. If a settled conviction prevails that good taste does not exist outside England it would be better to remain at home wrapped up in our own insularity." Sir John had the last word. He has gone far since then, and in the cultivation of courtesies the Union has gone farther still.

CHAPTER XVI

THE STEWARDSHIP OF MR. GILL: THE "BRITISH WORKMAN": THE UNION IN PROSE AND VERSE

THE coming of Mr. William Gill into the service of the Oxford Union was part of the march of events. The events of his time have not been uniform. How could they be, in the period of thirty-three years and more? Mr. Gill served with the old 90th Light Infantry, being trained by famous officers like Lord Wolseley and Sir Evelyn Wood, and has brought to the work which continues to this centenary year an astounding vigour and an astonishing patience.

In April of the year 1890, the Union had recovered from a period of decay so far as the finances of the institution were concerned. Very liberal provision for the comfort of members was the result of an appeal to all the generations, and for any undergraduate, especially to any freshman of 1890, the premises of the society proved as great an attraction as anything that Oxford could offer. The buildings which Mr. Armitage had so much improved are still the most comfortable part of the Union, but time has not failed to alter the outline of the building. The old house in which the steward lived for the first ten years of his official career is completely gone. Here stands a fine new library with other rooms, the whole block being completed by a dwelling-house which has sheltered Mr. and Mrs. Gill and their family for nearly a quarter of a century. This is part of the north wing of 1910–11, designed by Messrs. Mills and Thorpe of Oxford.

For thirty-three years the trustees of the Union have looked to Mr. Gill for information about the society, as have the senior treasurers in succession, and they have not looked in vain. He has always been the man on the spot. The list of the trustees alone is a study of the more permanent Oxford, with men like Sir Henry Acland, Canon Liddon, Archdeacon Palmer prominent. The present trustees are the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Mr. Joseph Wells, who is Warden of Wadham; the Warden of All Souls, Dr. Pember; and Professor W. S. Holdsworth of All Souls. In 1907, a new system brought the affairs of the library into better order. A senior librarian was appointed. It is recorded that Raymond Asquith wrought himself up to a blaze of heat in opposing this idea. Nor was he alone in his resentment.

The new office is well established now. From some points of view the library is more important than the debates. There is said to be in London a church attached to an organ. May it not be hoped that if the debates were ever to cease, the Union would still survive, attached to a library? Soon we shall be living in more spacious days, and for the help of junior librarians, zealous men, who pass so quickly, it is good that a succession of seniors in the colleges is already assured. For the library is destined to grow. Meanwhile, it may be noted that the present senior librarian is Mr. Woodward, Fellow of All Souls; that Mr. G. A. Gardiner of Magdalen carries on in the representative chair; and that Mr. T. H. Hine has laboured strenuously for many years in the library's service.

In the long period for which in so many ways Mr. Gill has shown activity, visitors to the Union have been numerous. All have been welcome. Great soldiers and prelates have spoken in the Union. Earl Roberts was one of these. Archbishop Temple once came down, by no means a stranger—he was a member. He spoke on "Things Indifferent," and observed that this, at over eighty years of age, was his maiden speech in the Union. He had attended the debates in his youth, and spoke of them with genuine delight. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman came to speak, winning all hearts by his geniality. Mr. David Lloyd George once appeared at a very critical time. Great was the uproar then, over the suffragist question. Mr. T. P. O'Connor paid the Union a visit and entertained all his hearers with his cogency and his wit. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, not only as his father's son, but as a light of the Cambridge Union Society, received a very hearty welcome here. Mr. W. A. S. Hewins, an old member of Pembroke, renewed his love for Oxford in a characteristic oration. Lord Winchilsea, Lord St. Aldwyn, and many another enthusiast in political or national affairs, added to the pleasures which the society provided for its members.

But the real red-letter days have been those when in profound silence towards the dead or amidst respectful plaudits for the living, names of surpassing eminence have been formally added to the Union roll of honour. Within twenty-five years the busts of Gladstone, Salisbury and Asquith have been unveiled. The speeches on these occasions have always proved worthy of their respective themes. From these, in rare dignity, stands out the remarkable oration delivered by Lord Rosebery on November 14, 1904. He was honouring the memory of Lord Salisbury as a man of " pure, exalted, and laborious life." Lord Rosebery himself, as a life-member of the Oxford Union, then claimed to have encouraged it among his friends, though he had held aloof from its actual debates. It was Mr. Jose of Hertford who presided on that memorable day.

It is perhaps rather remarkable that the Union has been apparently kept free from feminine influence. Soon, no doubt, the women's colleges will have a Union of their own. Ladies have always been welcome in the Union gallery, and on the whole they have been well rewarded for their tolerance and patience. Their presence has been greatly appreciated. In Eights Week the question, not a wise one, was once put :—" Sir, is the gallery safe ? " The President replied :— " The honourable member may be reassured, but should anything happen, the house could only rejoice in the fall of heavenly bodies!" This brought a hurricane of laughter and applause. But ladies have seldom appeared in the house as speakers. Once, in a debate on ghosts, Mrs. Gaskell, the author of "Cranford," was barely restrained from descending to air her views. It was a pity that this was not allowed: such an appearance would have proved historic. At the instance of the late treasurer, Mr. Sidney Ball, Mrs. Henry Fawcett came. Mrs. Humphry Ward also laid the society under an obligation by addressing it.

However things may change, life-membership persists in providing an eternal theme of curiosity and entertainment. Patience has been claimed for the Union mind as such. In one aspect this patience has almost overreached itself. Clubs always have their eccentric members. Oxford, outside the Union, has always a supply of quaint and extraordinary characters. But the Union, for some thirty years, could claim an exemplary type of this order, a champion of human waywardness. His name was Herbert Jackson. He belonged to the non-collegiate body. He was known as the "British Workman" and in that character we marvelled at him more than we loved him. But he had his rights, and the Union respected them from beginning to end.

The beginning was the last decade of the nineteenth century, during which period Mr. Jackson's heavy figure was not so corpulent as it afterwards became. He was not by any means ill-featured. His cheeks were fresh-coloured and his eyes were bright. He was heavily bearded. His gait was vigorous. For a good many years he looked the picture of health and he went about as if all Oxford belonged to him. That the Union belonged to him he was obviously convinced. He was there at all hours. He soon appropriated certain corners and certain chairs. He took possession of the newspapers and he often became vocal with complaints. His clothes were the most amazing thing about him. No tailor could have made them. They must have been fashioned by himself and after a manner they were adapted to his waist, his waddle, and his habits. The " British Workman " always made it clear that here he was and here he was going to stay. He was a life-member. Here, except for regular visits to his lodgings, he was nearly always at home.

Yet the man had a private life and character, and work of his own. He contrived as a coach to get pupils and for years to keep them. That he had the rudiments of the classics at his fingers' ends cannot be questioned, and there were many to whom he managed to impart the exact knowledge which the pass-schools require. Few friends he had, and when decline began, these were faithful to him. He came occasionally to the Union debates, but never spoke in them. When declension came, the patience of the members of the Union did not fail. The sense of pity prevailed at the last. One friend saw to it that some record of his strange career should be engraven in stone. In a part of Oxford which few University men ever penetrate, is the little churchyard of St. Sepulchre; and with diligence you may find a stone which bears this inscription:—

H.S.E.

Operarius Britannicus

HERBERTUS JACKSON B.A.

Scholaris Non Ascriptus

VIR

Integritate Inflexibili,
Animo Pariter Ac Corpore Rubusto,
Eheu, Tamen Diu Pariter Cruciato
Per Fere XL Annos Litteris Humanis
Academicos Accurate Imbuit
Tandem, Lumine Obscurato, Mutus Fato Concessit
Et Intrepidus In Hoc Sepulchrum Descendit
Natus in Comitatu Devoniae I Martii MDCCCLI
Obiit Oxoniae III Februarii MCMXXI

These words speak for themselves, and if they have no bearing on the human lot, they have no bearing on anything whatever. With all his strangeness, this was a man who bore the brunt of a difficult life very bravely. The word "intrepid" holds a world of meaning in it. "Inflexibility" in Herbert Jackson was evidently more than a pose. He loved Oxford, and in his own weird way he must have loved the Union. May peace be with him, and may light perpetual shine upon him.

Some truths are stranger than fiction. In regard to the Union, novelists must have had something to say in all these years, but few have dealt with the subject. Mr. John Galsworthy has glanced at it in "The Patrician." Mr. Compton Mackenzie has practically passed it by. Mr. Beverley Nichols has written very cleverly about it. Widely-known novelists who may boast—but they are not boastful people—of having held office in the Union like Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins have not been tempted to take the Union for a theme. Few versifiers have paid the society attention: though an exception must be made in the case of Mr. F. W. Hirst of Wadham, President in 1896, whose pen became busy one Eights Week concerning the Union and other matters in collaboration with Mr. L. S. Amery of All Souls (now First Lord of the Admiralty) and Mr. Cruso. The skit which these clever writers produced was an indictment of the decadents under the title "Aristophanes at Oxford." The cover has a huge "O.W." in the centre, and the scarce booklet is now of high value. The Union was faithfully dealt with in this work of art.

"Supreme is now the goddess of conceit,
    The Union's photographed itself,
And duplicated forms of the élite
    Crowd every wall and shelf,
No brutal Bass may advertise,
    The dainty diner sees
No longer Guinness framed, but spies
    Leighton's Hesperides."

All this is complimentary to an era when the Union had its own dining-room in the Clarendon Hotel, and for the adornment of the walls no less considerate a treasurer than F. E. Smith of Wadham was responsible.

Poets who looked at life rather differently were not uncommon in the Union. Sir Henry Newbolt of Corpus held the secretaryship in 1885. The Newdigate sometimes fell to a Union secretary, as to Mr. J. B. Harris-Burland of Exeter in 1893, and a librarian of thirty years later Mr. C. H. O. Scaife of St. John's, has succeeded to the Newdigate record. One novel worthy of special mention was produced some years back by Mr. A. Hamilton Gibbs, also of St. John's. It is entitled "Cheadle and Son," and it contains many intimate sketches of Oxford men. It treats the Union with candour, and though it is in the debating-hall that the hero eventually makes a great hit, the society itself is unsparingly denounced as an utter sham, with hardly a redeeming feature in its composition, except that it falls easily to the powerful influence of Mr. William Cheadle.

The Union from the year 1898 and onwards did not fail in any way to keep up its interest and prestige under successive Presidents. Mr. John Buchan of Brasenose took the Newdigate prize on the way to other achievements. The term of his presidency was Hilary, 1899. Since then he has become a famous writer, and he has found time to prove himself an expert in the art of life. The name of E. C. Bentley of Merton, President in 1896, is that of one who in the literary world has shown a great ingenuity as well as a certain strength of style. Thus do officers of the Union pass forth, in an unbroken series, to the activities of life. The Bishop of Southwark (Dr. Garbett) has already been mentioned in these pages. He has become, since his Oxford days, a leading figure, and a very hard-working one at that, in South London. The Bishop of Manchester, Dr. William Temple, once of Balliol, also of Queen's, took a very strong line in the Union as secretary, librarian, and president: and he has taken the same line ever since. In these days, too, Mr. H. M. Paul of New College, President in 1906, repeated the successes of his father, President in 1875. Mr. Philip Guedalla of Balliol treated the Union quite wittily in his volume "*Ignes Fatui*," and his later contributions to literature have made their mark. He was President in 1911. The Hon. A. Shaw of Trinity and Mr. Gervais Rentoul of Christ Church, Presidents in 1905 and 1906 respectively, have been successful in parliament. To Mr. Edward Marjoribanks of Christ Church came the opportunity of entertaining Dean Inge of St. Paul's in 1922: a picture is given of that debate on Victorianism. It was in 1907 that Mr. R. A. Knox of Balliol, afterwards of Trinity, flashed on the Union scene. His reputation was such that it may be said to have kept the Union going, intellectually speaking, till the Great War broke out.

Ably steered through its difficulties during the war period by the senior treasurer, the late Mr. Sidney Ball of St. John's, developments since have been manifold; but the greatest development of all has been the interchange of courtesies with the universities of America.

EPILOGUE

IF anything resembling a conclusion ever occurred in the Oxford Union, such an event may well be referred to the year 1914. That date, in many senses, forced a conclusion upon us all. Civilization has been on its trial ever since. That the Union thereupon came to a standstill for nearly five years is only natural. In that period, the greater number of our youthful members took the field in some capacity, to serve a country never so fiercely tried. Those who look forward to the future are almost bound to take a melancholy pleasure in thinking of this testing-time, which is by no means over yet. Could it be certain that it *was* over, civilization would not have to come up for trial again. Of course, where heroism truly exists, there is no need for tears. But we turn to memory, very often, for consolation, and since toll is taken of every life sacrificed in the arduous struggle, memorials naturally spring up on every side. Of these, in the City and University of Oxford alone, there must be at least two score at the present day.

The tablet erected in the Union debating-hall to commemorate the Great War occupies a central position. It is simple and unobtrusive. The members who fell in the war were many: in their own colleges, no doubt, every name is inscribed with honour. It may be possible to offer, some day, a fuller recognition to the rank and file, but the committee of 1921 thought it best, in dealing with the funds at their disposal, to set up a record of the most conspicuous war-services, as shown by those who had been specially active in the Union of their day. In many respects the names thus given are characteristic. They show the Union at its best and truest. They are striking in their intimacy. The first thought on reading them is that they embody a whole series of family traditions. An Asquith heads the list, and he is immediately followed by a Gladstone. In the same way a Palmer, a Talbot, a Villiers receive their due. The newer ranks of speakers are not less nobly represented in Bevir and Brinsley Richards, Bland and Woodhouse, Thorp and Sewell, whilst the staff of the Union, in the brothers Dawson, is duly marked for honour.

This memorial was unveiled on the afternoon of November 24, 1921, by Dr. Strong, Bishop of Ripon, formerly Dean of Christ Church, with Dr. Carlyle of University benevolently assisting. The chair was occupied by Mr. K. M. Lindsay of Worcester. Commendatory words, spoken by president and bishop, were gracefully conceived and phrased, and there was much more to warm than to chill the heart in the friendly and affectionate scene.

It was wholly fitting that it should have fallen to Mr. Lindsay to preside on this occasion. He represented, in a new sense, the newer age. The cause of labour, which he has espoused, is not one to which Oxford will ever show itself indifferent. In Mr. Lindsay, the gospel of the Union might be said to be centred, for new inquiry is a gospel in itself.

For many years, Conservatism held the lead in the Union. There can be no doubt that because Conservatism is a moderating influence and disinclined to make rash experiments, Oxford looks kindly on Conservative leaders as such, and there is a personal feeling in the Union on this score, a loyalty to great memories. Governments pass, so that measures have often seemed more important than men. Temper rose high for generations over a few leading questions. It is wonderful to see how these things—the franchise, free trade, Home Rule, disestablishment have lost power. The franchise question is practically settled. Free trade is not a party issue now: perhaps it is passing into the field of economics. It is unlikely that Ireland will be conspicuous again in English politics, but at one time the theme took precedence in Oxford over everything. Not many years ago Grattan Esmond, a young Sinn Feiner, flashing with hatred, declared himself an alien and an enemy, in the crowded Union. "I ask to be treated as your enemy, not as a wayward slave!" Both sides yielded their generous applause. It is, indeed, rather a sad thought that so little is likely to be heard of Ireland at the Union in the future; but Oxford has always had a strong infusion of Irish blood, and at any rate the exchange of courtesies between the sister countries will always be possible.

Evidently some of the old pre-occupations are gone. But Conservatism stands for the rights of property, especially for property on a large scale, for individualism, for the privileges of the happier few, and how does Oxford come in at all, if not amongst the happier few? But the Conservatism of Oxford is not only frank for itself. It distrusts its opponents, thinking them rash, unpatriotic, narrowly unobservant and disregardful of all the greatest theories of empire. Moreover, stability is a good thing in itself, and there are a thousand things in England which ought not to be disturbed. Nevertheless, the Conservatism of Oxford, as expressed in the Union, has little of what is known as "die-hardism" in it. There is a fairly willing acceptance of the *chose jugée.* Into that category Ireland seems to have come at last. This means that in quietness and confidence the Conservatism of to-day is content to play a waiting game. A Conservative Government hold the reins, and the Union is glad to see Lord Curzon, Lord Donoughmore, Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Peel and Major Boyd Carpenter in the Ministry, for all have taken their share in the proceedings of the past.

It is difficult to place the Liberal party now, but as it revives in the country, so does its ardour in the Union, where Liberal principles are never lacking, touch the practical issues of the day. In Mr. Asquith the Union has always believed. There has never been lacking for this great leader a real respect, intensified, perhaps, when the fortunes of political warfare have gone against him, for chivalry lives and lasts amongst Oxford men. Firmness of character, loyalty to friends, adherence to principle, have always been characteristic of Mr. Asquith, and nothing less must be said of Sir John Simon, to whom the country looks with confidence for the next constructive efforts of the Liberal party.

If some of the old movements have lost their force, it by no means follows that the new movements, which are just coming in, will be without power to excite. The inequalities of our social system must keep politics lively for a long time to come ; but it is of happy augury that these are religious questions, too. Nothing is more profoundly felt in the Oxford Union of to-day than a desire to ameliorate the lot common. Men can see how affairs are interlocked, how we cannot separate ourselves class from class, or nation from nation. Youth, in the Union, comes into this great hope, a religious hope, for it is concerned with the betterment of mankind.

* * * *

Events repeat themselves, and once more I am attending a debate in the Union. I have exchanged greetings with all the Presidents of the centenary year : with Mr. J. D. Woodruff of New College, with Mr. Gordon Bagnall of St. John's, with Mr. M. C. Hollis of Balliol. The scene is much as it was under Poulton or Armour, both of Jesus, and they were separated by nearly thirty years ; or under Earl Beauchamp, who presided over us with great ability in 1893 ; or under H. I. P. Hallett, another member of the "House," who served his term of office in the summer of 1908. Names divided by years but associated in spirit might be multiplied. But, even as I think of these things, the President asks me to take his place in the chair.

To fulfil the duties is difficult now, though only for the duration of a single speech, but I am grateful for the command from St. John's. Through the kind prompting of Mr. R. C. Matthews of New College, in Mr. Gardiner's seat, I cope with the situation. The procedure has changed. The faces below me are friendly but unfamiliar. President and secretary now control the speeches between them by means of an electric light switched to the chair. Tellers take their places by the door. Nobody can escape from the house without recording a vote. " How strange it seems, and new ! " Votes in the old days were often left to chance. Now, in these brief moments, the whole scene takes upon itself, for me, as composite as any president, the substance of a dream.

" What fun we had at the Union ! " These echoes are familiar. There is a processional element in all that passes around me. It seems that we are engaged in an agricultural debate. We are concerned for the future of England. And I have risen to address the house. Of course I quote poetry, and draw the sympathies of all to a picture of Elizabethan England in distress. And so I close. Then rises Balcarres of Magdalen, a great figure of our day. He meets my arguments with scorn. " *And we have to listen to a lengthy recitation from some unknown poet of three hundred years ago !* " " *Shakespeare, Sir !* " I interpolate loudly and with glee ; and the house recollects the quotation. Even so did we score off one another in those happy days.

All this passes before me quickly, and then I surrender the chair again to the President. Of course I stay for the rest of the debate. I am greatly struck with the spirit that prevails. There are many who wish to speak. I see proofs of interest on every side. Gradually I glean evidence to the effect that the debates would profit by adjournments. One night is hardly enough to give men a chance in the new Oxford. Adjournments were frequent in the great times, and visitors were few. Why should not these things be reconsidered ?

True, the star-turns of famous politicians bring crowds to the Union, and the scene, again under Mr. Bagnall's presidency—with Mr. Victor Evans, ex-President, of St. John's, very much to the front—when Mr. Lloyd George discoursed on the subject of Versailles, was a striking one. Over a thousand votes were recorded. Mr. Lloyd George was extremely amusing, Mr. Pringle was in fine fighting form, and the speakers of the Union acquitted themselves most admirably. Of course the merrymaker will not be suppressed. It was on this occasion (1923) that Mr. Franklin of Queen's perpetrated one of his wildest jests. Pointing to the bust of Mr. Asquith and with his eye on Mr. Lloyd George, he inquired: "Sir, would it not be better if they had sent 'Enery?" And then he fled into the outer darkness.

No doubt the Union will continue to develop, to expand. One hope I express. Of one simple and natural acquisition the society still stands in need. It is an odd thing that the Union possesses no dining-room. What the Union really wants is not a dining-room merely, but a dining-hall. As time goes on, the Union may even assume the proportions of one of the smaller colleges, if the space available permit. It would be a thousand pities to alter the present building. But in imagination I have long pictured a hall of use and ornament, one which will enshrine the overflow of pictures from the debating-hall and will gradually accumulate treasures of its own. Such a hall should be panelled. Heraldic experts would gradually adorn the panels with arms of those who have passed through office in the society. It would be a long array. Here would be some reminder, too, of the artistic achievement of the past; there is at present no memorial of some very notable figures. There are no portraits of Ruskin, Burne-Jones, William Morris. There are many other gaps to be filled.

Here, before the curtain is rung down, let me quote from a friendly hand some words which treat of the Union as others

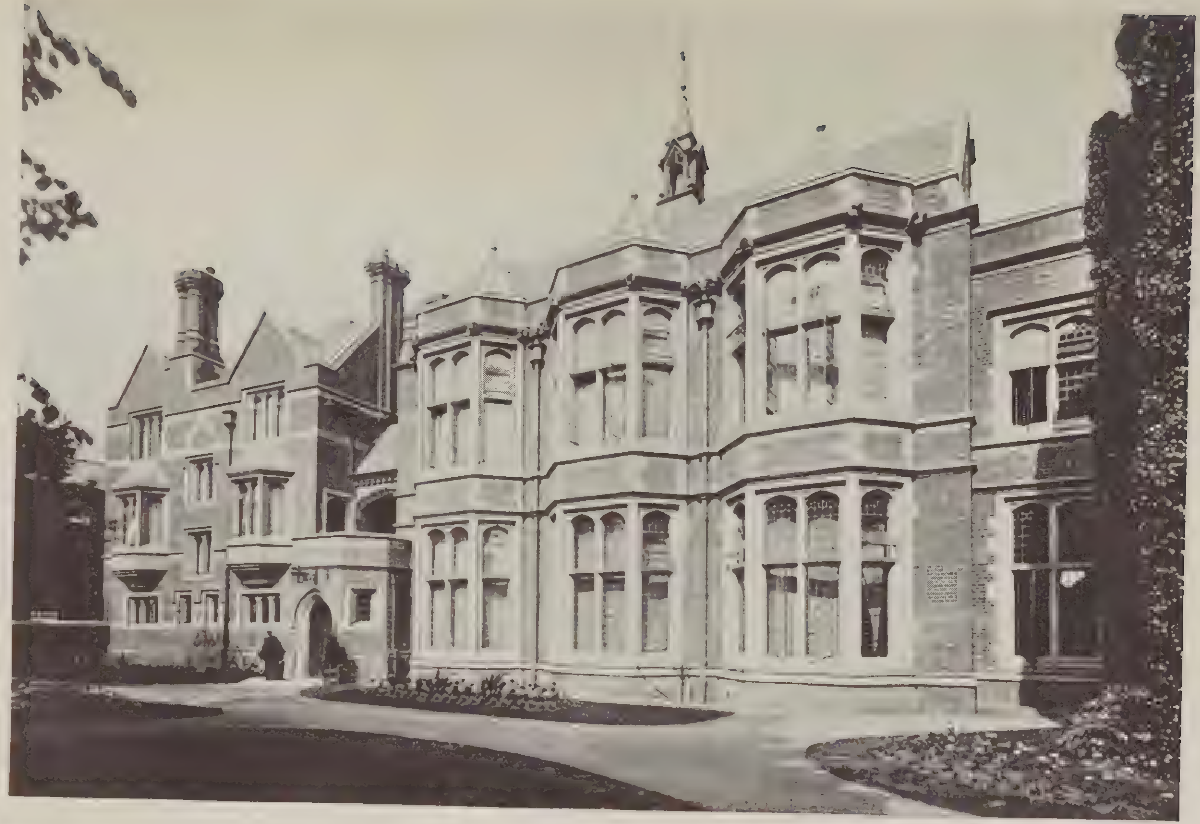


Photo: Hills & Saunders.

THE NEW BUILDING, 1911.

A UNION DEBATE, 1922: ON VICTORIANISM.

Mr. Edward Marjoribanks (Christ Church) in the Chair.

have often seen it. It is Lord Birkenhead who is speaking, and of all living ex-Presidents I know of none who has taken the Union more to heart. I quote from his essay on the subject in " Points of View." He writes :

" On many occasions I have been able to pass through Oxford and spend a few hours there. I often go to the Union and spend some minutes in the Victorian Debating-Hall. The room is empty and the place is silent, but yet these walls have listened to nearly all the great masters of rhetoric . . . the walls might seem to exude the very savour of oratory. But the portraits on the walls forbid the idea that Oxford depends in any way on the imported orator.

" There the portraits hang, row on row, a pictorial constellation of the past and present. . . . Here are Salisbury, Gladstone, and Asquith standing on their enduring pedestals —Manning and Mandell Creighton, E. T. Cook, York Powell, the Cecils and the Asquiths, the Mowbrays and the Talbots, and on the living roll of fame, Milner and Curzon, Anthony Hope and A. E. W. Mason. Here within a single chamber lies the sifted ability of Oxford. The pictures, the photographs, the etchings, and the busts possess all the charm and demand all the reverence which we might give to some Gothic cathedral raised by the piety of our ancestors to commemorate a belief in the joy and the high destiny of our successors."

Lord Birkenhead has called the old Union " whimsical," and so it is. But statesmen sometimes change their minds, and then they look back to see how often they changed them in days of yore. Old ? Yes, the Union is old. It has reached the respectable age of a hundred years. But it is new as well. There is a passage in English literature written by a keen member of the Union, and loved by many. I quote it, partly because of that, partly because I have known it ever since I worshipped in St. Martin's as a boy. Relativity answers for everything, and the great and the little all belong to the same story. Dean Stanley wrote of Canterbury :

"The view from St. Martin's Church is indeed one of the most inspiriting that can be found in the world; there is none to which I would more willingly take anyone who doubted whether a small beginning could lead to a great and lasting good—none which carries us more vividly back into the past, or more hopefully forward to the future."

For my poor silver, Stanley's gold! But it was free inquiry which set us on this quest, and freedom is a great thing for us all. Oxford is sometimes envied in the world, but whenever she comes prominently forward it is in the interests of some great idea. Her recent progress is the proof. Of Oxford's magic power, many beside her own sons have written. But the pen, as we leave Oxford, turns on us wistfully as we realize that we must go. The truth is that Oxford we cannot leave.

"For when some of us are clerics, and when some of us are not;
And when most of us have drifted to the Bar;
When a few of us have ruled the roast in some too torrid spot,
And we absolutely don't know where we are:
A sign, a dream, an echo from these consecrated towers,
A message—or a murmur—or a breath——
Must move for us the measure of the fervour that was ours,
That must be yours and ours for life or death."

So the curtain falls. The Oxford Union has far to go, but it will be on a road well worn by resolute travellers, most of whom in an exacting world have found the way, through Oxford, to happiness. Our own epilogue will not be spoken just yet. But, as we await the rising of the curtain for the centenary, it chances that Youth is preparing once again, at Westminster, its annual Latin play. Time-honoured the scene, with lessons for all, but especially for us. One word in the play never changes. Let it be written here as a message of infinite hope and infinite goodwill to the Oxford Union. Let it take a triple form, because all good things go in threes.

FLOREAT! FLOREAT! FLOREAT!

APPENDIX

Presidents of the Oxford Union

1823—1923

BALLIOL: 62.

D. Maclean (1823), T. B. Hobhouse (1828), H. E. Manning (1829), J. E. Lyall, E. Cardwell, A. C. Tait, J. M. Capes (1831–1835), G. R. Moncrieff (1837), W. C. Lake (1838), H. W. Sulivan (1839), J. D. Coleridge (1843), F. R. Sandford (1845), C. H. Stanton (1847), H. J. S. Smith (1851), H. N. Oxenham (1852), G. Lushington (1854), Hon. G. C. Brodrick (1854), C. S. C. Bowen (1858), A. V. Dicey (1859), T. H. Green (1861), F. H. Jeune (1864), C. P. Ilbert (1865), Lord F. Hervey (1867), J. L. Strachan-Davidson (1867), C. A. Fyffe (1869), J. A. Doyle (1870), J. A. Dyce (1872), W. M. Sinclair (1873), R. G. C. Mowbray (1873), H. H. Asquith (1874), T. Raleigh (1875), A. Milner (1876), A. A. Baumann (1877), Visct. Lymington (1877), Hon. W. St. John Brodrick (1878), Hon. G. N. Curzon (1880), J. A. Hamilton (1882), A. N. Cumming (1882), W. Hudson Shaw (1883), C. G. Lang (1884), A. H. Hawkins (1886), G. F. Mortimer (1889), H. Belloc (1895), A. Boyd-Carpenter (1896), J. W. Cleland (1897), A. H. D. Steel-Maitland (1899), R. C. K. Ensor (1900), R. Asquith (1900), H. Asquith (1903), W. Temple (1904), R. A. Knox (1909), R. G. D. Laffan (1909), L. J. Stein (1910), P. Guedalla (1911), F. K. Griffith (1912), R. M. Barrington-Ward (1912), W. T. Monckton (1913), A. H. M. Wedderburn (1914), C. Gallop (1920), J. Beverley-Nichols (1920), N. A. Beechman (1921), M. C. Hollis (1923).

CHRISTCHURCH: 56.

Hon. A. W. Ashley, Hon. T. A. Powys, Visct. Ingestre (1823), E. Vernon-Harcourt, H. B. Baring, Visct. Mahon, H. H. Dodgson, Hon. J. A. Stuart-Wortley, Hon. J. C. Talbot (1824), H. W. Torrens, W. J. Blake, Hon. T. Vesey, F. Calvert, J. R. Wood, W. Trower (1825), D. Smith, H. Tufnell, W. R. Courtenay (1827), C. Baring (1828), T. D. Acland (1829), J. M. Gaskell, W. E. Gladstone (1830), Hon. J. Bruce, J. Anstice (1831), Earl of Lincoln (1831), W. G. Ward

(1832), J. Adams (1834), J. R. Mowbray (1836), W. H. Ridley (1838), J. B. Blackett (1840), M. Portal (1842), Earl of Dufferin (1847), G. Ward Hunt (1847), M. Blackett (1848), G. R. Portal (1848), W. H. Milman (1849), A. Mitchell (1851), Hon. F. Lygon (1851), H. L. Harrison (1860), Hon. R. C. E. Abbot (1863), E. S. Talbot (1866), C. T. Redington (1869), A. H. Turner (1870), E. Ashmead-Bartlett (1873), H. J. Mackinder (1883), C. Emmott (1886), F. H. Coller (1890), R. C. Phillimore (1892), Earl Beauchamp (1893), J. S. Phillimore (1895), L. R. F. Oldershaw (1898), G. S. C. Rentoul (1906), N. S. Talbot (1907), H. I. P. Hallett (1908), G. W. L. Talbot (1913), E. Marjoribanks (1922).

NEW COLLEGE: 28.

T. F. Hodges (1824), A. Grant (1828), H. W. Moncrieff (1829), H. W. Cripps (1837), H. M. White (1844), W. A. Fearon (1864), H. A. Venables (1874), R. F. Horton (1877), N. Micklem (1878), E. T. Cook (1879), C. Arnold White (1881), J. S. G. Pemberton (1883), Sir W. H. A. Worsley (1884), G. S. S. Vidal (1885), Hon. A. G. V. Peel (1890), W. H. Cozens-Hardy (1891), Lord Ampthill (1891), R. A. Johnson (1897), G. Gathorne-Hardy (1899), H. T. Baker (1900), A. Cecil (1901), H. M. Paul (1906), W. G. C. Gladstone (1907), M. H. Richmond (1908), A. W. Cockburn (1910), N. Micklem (1911), J. W. Russell (1920), J. D. Woodruff (1923).

ORIEL: 28.

J. C. Colquhoun (1823), J. Bramston (1823), Hon. H. G. Vane, C. Des Voeux, R. Dallas, R. I. Wilberforce (1824), S. Wilberforce, Hon. C. A. Murray (1825), N. H. Macdonald, R. A. Hornby (1825), F. Trench (1828), H. W. Wilberforce (1829), Hon. S. Herbert (1830), C. Marriott (1834), W. Sinclair (1834), Sir W. N. Lushington-Tilson (1836), D. P. Chase (1842), R. J. Simpson (1846), E. B. Lomer (1850), G. J. Goschen (1853), J. H. Bridges (1855), T. W. Fowle (1858), J. Bryce (1862), A. J. McGregor (1888), S. C. Parmiter (1889), J. F. W. Galbraith (1892), A. F. H. Wiggin (1914), R. M. Carson (1922).

TRINITY: 20.

A. J. Lewis (1824), E. T. B. Twistleton (1827), H. Merivale (1827), G. K. Richards (1832), R. Palmer (1832), G. Rawlinson (1840), G. F. Bowen (1843), W. H. Scott (1843), F. Meyrick (1849), R. E. Bartlett (1855), P. F. Eliot (1857), W. Sanday (1867), M. H. Gould (1874), F. R. Burrows (1879), M. E. Sadler (1882), C. T. Knaus (1890), A. E. Ripley (1891), A. Shaw (1905), M. H. Woods (1905), E. H. G. Roberts (1914).

UNIVERSITY: 13.

R. Lowe (1834), E. H. Plumptre (1842), J. Fitzgerald (1853), A. G. Butler (1854), W. F. Wilberforce (1856), E. K. Bennet (1858), A. O. Rutson (1859), A. Robinson (1863), J. Sargeaunt (1881), Lord R. Cecil (1885), G. J. F. Tomlinson (1901), A. D. Lindsay (1902), Hon. R. S. A. Palmer (1910).

ST. JOHN'S: 12.

J. A. Hessey (1837), F. M. Beaumont (1860), Hon. Auberon Herbert (1862), H. A. James (1871), H. M. R. Pope (1872), W. A. Phillips (1886), H. A. Morrah (1894), W. A. Moore (1904), E. P. Swain (1909), L. Hore-Belisha (1919), J. V. Evans (1922), A. G. Bagnall (1923).

WADHAM: 12.

E. Massie (1833), T. Brancker (1836), R. Congreve (1841), S. J. Hulme (1846), W. Congreve (1848), W. W. Shirley (1852), B. B. Rogers (1853), A. H. Beesly (1862), F. E. Smith (1894), J. A. Simon (1896), F. W. Hirst (1896), E. Macfadyen (1902).

EXETER: 11.

R. C. Powles (1841), W. B. Marriott (1847), G. D. Boyle (1849), C. H. Pearson (1852), C. A. Turner (1856), O. W. Tancock (1862), H. M. Godfray (1887), A. J. Carlyle (1888), H. du Parcq (1902), C. T. Le Quesne (1908), T. W. Earp (1919).

BRASENOSE: 10.

D. C. Wrangham (1824), W. E. Buckley (1839), J. G. Cazenove (1845), D. C. Lathbury (1855), J. Oakley (1856), T. R. Halcomb (1857), R. A. Germaine (1878), G. O. Bellewes (1885), P. J. Macdonell (1895), J. Buchan (1899).

MERTON: 10.

E. E. Villiers (1825), J. F. Mackarness (1844), M. Creighton (1868), R. S. Copleston (1868), C. T. Cruttwell (1872), R. H. Hadden (1876), C. J. Blacker (1887), J. A. V. Magee (1892), C. H. Eliot (1893), E. C. Bentley (1898).

QUEEN'S: 10.

H. Highton (1838), J. R. K. Ralph (1850), E. Moore (1860), J. R. Magrath (1861), G. A. Simcox (1866), W. Awdry (1866), T. H. Grose (1871), B. R. Wise (1880), E. L. S. Horsburgh (1881), A. S. T. Griffith-Boscawen (1888).

CORPUS CHRISTI : 9.

K. E. Digby (1861), R. W. Bosworth Smith (1863), H. W. Paul (1875), D. P. Barton (1877), A. Dyson Williams (1884), F. Lenwood (1897), T. Cuthbertson (1901), J. R. Brooke (1903), J. St. G. Heath (1905).

MAGDALEN : 8.

J. Wilson-Patten (1823), R. Durnford (1823), A. Pott (1845), J. Conington (1846), E. H. Knatchbull Hugessen (1850), W. Lock (1871), Lord Balcarres (1894), Hon. H. Lygon (1906).

LINCOLN : 7.

A. A. Clive (1864), W. B. Duggan (1870), G. M. Savery (1876), H. G. Snowden (1889), F. W. Curran (1903), G. S. Woodhouse (1912), W. J. Bland (1913)

HERTFORD : 5.

C. T. Arnold (1840), R. Dawson (1880), H. W. Liversidge (1893), E. S. Jose (1904), R. Bevir (1911).

JESUS : 3.

P. P. Fogg (1859), E. B. Poulton (1879), W. S. Armour (1907).

PEMBROKE : 3.

J. Mitchinson (1857), A. Sloman (1875), C. B. Ramage (1921).

WORCESTER : 3.

J. T. B. Landon (1841), R. Robinson (1865), K. M. Lindsay (1921).

KEBLE : 2.

C. A. H. Green (1887), C. F. Garbett (1898).

In the foregoing list, the name of W. Sinclair (St. Mary Hall) has been included under Oriel ; of C. T. Arnold (Magdalen Hall) under Hertford ; and J. A. Doyle (All Souls) under Balliol.

INDEX

Abbot (afterwards Lord Colchester), 225
Abercorn, Marquess (Duke) of, 46
Acland, H. W. (Sir), 100, 267, 298
  Regius Professor of Medicine, 251
Acland, Sir Thomas Dyke, 30
Acton, Lord, a dictum of, 79
Addis of Balliol, 215
Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, 196, 236
  his gift to the Union, 204
  joins the Union, 202
"Alfred Society," the, Oxenham and, 119
Alston of Christ Church, 52
America, the War of Secession, 254
Amery, L. S., 302
Ampthill, Lord, 268, 269
Anson (son of Earl of Lichfield), 11
  death of, 18
"Apostles," the, 32
Armitage, Mr., 297
Arnold, Frederic, of Christ Church, 216
Arnold, Matthew, and Coleridge, 109
  and the "Decade," 86
  attends jubilee banquet, 251
  holds Professorship of Poetry, 208
Arnold, Thomas (afterwards headmaster of Rugby), 9
Art and literature, dual mission of, 174
Arthur, King, unsolved mystery of, 180
Arthurian legends depicted in Union, 176 *et seq.*, 228
Ashmead-Bartlett, Ellis, of Christ Church, 220, 235, 269
  and the frescoes, 189
Asquith, Right Hon. H. H., 225, 226
  and the jubilee banquet, 234, 235
  chairman of Royal Commission on the Universities, 198 (note)
  Dr. James on, 259
  visits Union, 293
Asquith, Raymond, 298
"Attic" Society, the, 7
Austin of Exeter, 130
Awdry, William (afterwards Bishop of South Tokyo), 225

B

Babington of New College, 219
Bagnall, Gordon, 308, 310
Balcarres of Magdalen (Earl of Crawford and Balcarres), 286, 309
Ball, Sidney, 300, 304
Barilla duty, Manning's explanation of the, 40
Baring, Charles, 29
Baring, H. B., 17
Barne of Exeter, 60, 77
Bartlett, R. E., 116, 117, 147
  an epigram by, 156
  records a lively debate, 125
Barton, Dunbar (Sir), 259
"Battle of Composition," the, 160, 161
Baumann, A. A., of Balliol, 259
Beaconsfield, Earl of (*see* Disraeli)
Beauchamp, Lord (*see* Lygon)
Beaumont, F. M., 202
Bede, Cuthbert, 28
Bedford, W. K. R., 97, 131
  his reminiscences of Oxford, 104, 105, 106, 107
Beesly, Prof. E. S., 118
  on a scene in the Union, 125
  on eloquence of Rogers, 153
Bellamy of St. John's, 92
Bellew, Mr., 283
Bellewes, G. O., of Brasenose, 266
Belloc, Hilaire, 286, 288, 292, 294
  his "Path to Rome," 287
Benham, C. D., 280
Bennet, E. K., 160, 162, 163, 173
Benson, Ralph, 107
Bentley, E. C., 303
Bertram of New College, 265
Binyon, Laurence, 269
Birkenhead, Lord (*see* Smith, F. E.)
Birmingham and Edgbaston Debating Society, as hosts, 296
Blackballing, 60, 93
  annulment of, 99
Blacker, C. J., 262
Blackett of Christ Church, 93
Bliss, Dr. Philip, Principal of St. Mary Hall, 97, 98, 99, 114
"Bloke-Breakfast Stakes," the, 230
Bonaparte, Lucien, his compliment to Oxford, 112
Borough patronage, debate on, 24
Bowen, Charles, 147, 149
  Burne-Jones on, 173
Bowen, G. F. (Sir George), 112
  Colonial governorships of, 96
Boyd-Carpenter, Archibald, 291, 294, 296

Boyle, G. D. (afterwards Dean of Salisbury), 115, 128
  comments on Lord Robert Cecil, 129
Boyle (Earl of Glasgow), visits famine-stricken districts, 106
Boyle, Lord, resigns membership of Oxford Union, 29
Brabourne, Lord (*see* Knatchbull-Hugessen)
Bradbury, John (Sir), 293, 296
Bramston, J., of Oriel, 14
Brasenose, impositions for offences at, 155
Brancker of Wadham, 60, 67, 74
Bridges of Wadham, 118, 125, 147
Bright, Dr. Franck, 149
Bright, John, Sydney Hall's cartoons of, 206
British Association, the, entertained by Union, 97, 111
Brodie, Benjamin, forms the "Decade" society, 86
Brodrick, George, of Balliol, 118, 159, 200
Brodrick, Hon. St. John (Lord Midleton), 259
Brougham, Lord, 48
Browne, and the "Ramblers," 75
Browning, Robert, a prelate's estimate of, 170
  and a professorial vacancy, 209
  presents a set of his poems and plays to Union, 210
Bruce, Colonel, equerry to the Prince of Wales, 202
Bruce, F. R. C. (Dr.), 289, 290
Brussels, a notable excursion to, 296
Bryce, James, of Oriel (Lord), 197, 201, 212, 236
  and Bosworth Smith, 255
  "The Holy Roman Empire" of, 201
Buchan, John, 303
Buckingham, Mr. and Mrs., 163, 220
Buckley of Brasenose, 84, 254
Burgon, (Dean,) 92, 160
  and the "Battle of Composition," 161
  candidature for professorship of poetry, 210
  his testimony to Paul Parnell, 91, 94
Burke, Gladstone and, 50
Burne-Jones, Edward (Sir), 169
  and the Pre-Raphaelite movement, 172 *et seq.*, 228
  mural painting by, 176, 178, 185, 228
Burne-Jones, Lady, a pen-picture of Val Prinsep by, 174
Burrows, F. R., of Trinity, 260
Butler, Arthur, opposes Goschen, 151
Butler of University, 123
Buxton, Charles, visits Union, 295
Byron, his career at Cambridge, 32, 33
Byron *v.* Shelley debate at the Union, 34
Bywater, and the Union library, 197

C

Caird, Edward, 197, 257
Calderon, George, 279
Cambridge, and Oxford Debating Society, 22
Cambridge Union, and the "Apostles," 32
  the Vice-Chancellor and, 9
Cambridge University, debating society at, 8
Campbell-Bannerman, Right Hon. Henry, visits Union, 298
Canada adopts Home Rule, 89
Canning, George, 15
Canning Club, the, 15
Capell, Hon. A. A., 261
Capes, J. M., 77, 83
Capital punishment, debates on, 227
  Thomas Hobhouse's speech on, 86–7
Cardwell, E. (Right Hon.), 60, 67, 74
  and the "Ramblers," 64
  Robert Lowe and, 80
  speech at jubilee banquet, 239
Carlyle, Dr. A. J., 282, 306
Carson, R. M., of Oriel, 259
Catholic emancipation, 31, 45, 53
Cazenove, J. G., 103, 152
  becomes Provost of Cumbrae, 98
Cecil, Lord Hugh, 263, 284
Cecil, Lord Robert, 267
Cecil, Lord Robert (Marquess of Salisbury), 128, 129, 130
  and the jubilee banquet, 237, 245
  speaks in Protection debate, 131, 137
Chamberlain, Right Hon. Austen, visits Union, 299
Chambers, E. K., 282
Charley, William (Sir), 154, 162
Chartism, Coleridge's defence of, 108
Chase, Drummond Percy (Dr.), 87, 98, 106
  on Union debates, 103, 108
"Cheadle and Son," 303
Christian, Bertram, 281
Church of England, R. B. Smith on, 257
Church patronage, a debate on, 216
Churchill, Lord Randolph, visits Union, 265, 266, 294
Clive, A. A., of Lincoln, 214, 217
Close, depicted in a cartoon, 209
Clough, and the "Decade," 86
Cobbett, William, 85
"Coffee and Conversation" ode, the, 163
Colchester, Lord (*see* Abbot)
Coleridge, John Duke (Lord), 107, 108 *et seq.*
  and the jubilee banquet, 245, 252
  Goldwin Smith and, 206
Coles, Stuckey (later head of the Pusey House), 219
Coller, F. H., 262, 264
Collier of Oriel, 117
Collins, Tom, of Wadham, 106
Colquhoun, J. C., 11, 14, 23
Comyn of St. John's, 8
"Coningsby," a paraphrase from, 1
Conington, John, of Magdalen, "the sick vulture," 102, 114

Cook, A. K., historian of Winchester College, 236
Cook, Edward Tyas (Sir), 254
Copleston, Reginald (later Bishop of Calcutta), 215, 216, 225, 226
  and the frescoes, 189
Cornish (Mowbray) of Christ Church, 76, 77, 78
Cotton, H. E. A., 280
Cotton, Julian, of Corpus, 280
Courtenay, 22
Cox, G. W., of New College, 27
Cozens-Hardy, W. H., 264, 265
Crawford and Balcarres, Earl of (*see* Balcarres)
Creighton, Mandell (afterwards Bishop of London), 197, 216, 225
  reminiscences of the Union by, 221–2
Cross, J. Ashton, of Balliol, 258
Crowfoot of Brasenose, 296
Cruickshank (Canon) A. H., 266
Cruso, Mr., 302
Cruttwell, Mr., librarian of Union, 234
Curzon, G. N. (Lord), 260, 261

D

Daniel of Worcester, 257
Davey, Horace, of University (Lord Davey), 123, 145
Dawson, R., of Hertford, 260
Dearmer, Percy (professor at King's College), 282
"Decade" society, the, formation of, 86
Democracy, advent of, a bishop's declaration on, 205, 251
Denison, Stephen, 40
Derby, Lord, a cartoon of, by Sydney Hall, 206
Derry, Bishop of, 107
Des Vœux, C., 11
Dicey, A. V., of Balliol, 123, 168, 217
Dickens, Charles, the Union and, 110
Dillon, John, visits Union, 294
Disestablishment, an animated debate on, 235
Disinterestedness the true aim of a University, 197
Disraeli, Benjamin (Lord Beaconsfield), 1, 2
  a cartoon of, 206
  attacks Gladstone, 49
Dodgson, H. H., of Christ Church, 17, 23
Donoughmore, Lord, 293
Doyle, Francis Hastings (Sir), 44, 51
  and Robert Lowe, 47, 48
  and Shelley *v.* Byron debate, 34, 37
  appointed Professor of Poetry, 209
Dufferin, Lord, 112
  maiden speech of, 105, 106
  reminiscences of the Union by, 113
  visits famine-stricken districts in Ireland, 106
Duggan, W. B., 224, 226, 234
Du Parcq, H., of Exeter, 259
Durnford Richard (Bishop of Chichester), 14, 17, 22, 29
  as debater, 13, 24
  reminiscences of early days at Oxford, 14, 15, 21
  speech at jubilee banquet, 205, 250

E

Eardley, Culling (C. E. Smith), of Oriel, 25
Edward VII, King (*see* Albert Edward, Prince of Wales)
Elgin, Lord (Duke of Newcastle), 47, 51, 54
  his friendship with Manning, 42
  Lord Selborne's recollections of, 248
Eliot, Claude ("the Smiling Parson"), 281, 285
Emancipation of slaves, debate on, 52
Emmott, C., of Christ Church, 266
Esmond, Grattan, 307
Evans, Victor, 310
Everth of Trinity, 8

F

Faber of Balliol, 77, 78, 83
Faulkner of University, 175
Fawcett, Mrs. Henry, visits Union, 300
Fearon, W. A. (afterwards headmaster of Winchester), 225
Field of Queen's, 29
Fitzgerald of University, 130, 142, 147
Fogg of Jesus, 162
Foreign politics, growing interest in, 112 *et seq.*
Forgery, and the death-penalty for, 24
Fowle of Oriel, 160
Fowler of Corpus, 123
Fox, Mr., Gladstone and, 44
Franco-German war, 254
Franklin of Queen's, 310
Fraser, James (Bishop), 106
Free Trade *v.* Protection debate, 128, 130 *et seq.*
Freedom of the press, debated in the Union, 54
Fremantle, W. H. (afterwards Dean of Ripon), 149
Fresco painting at Oxford Union: designs of, 176

G

Galbraith, J. F. W., 264, 284
Garbett, Bishop, 303
Gardiner, G. A., 298
Gardiner, Professor, 116
Gaskell, Milnes, 30, 44, 46, 47, 51
  contrasted with Gladstone, 42
Gaskell, Mrs., 300

Gathorne-Hardy, 211
  speech at jubilee banquet, 244
George, Right Hon. D. Lloyd, visits Union, 299, 310
Germaine, R. A., of Brasenose, 254
Gibbs, A. Hamilton, 303
Gibson, Hon. W. W. (Lord Ashbourne), 282
Giffard, Hardinge (afterwards Lord Halsbury), 128
Giles of Corpus, 78
Gill, William (steward), 263, 297
Giveen, E. M., 263
Gladstone, W. E., 30, 34, 35, 40 *et seq.*, 52, 112, 152, 236
  a tribute to his eloquence, 248
  addresses the Union, 267
  analytical faculty of, 51
  defeated at Oxford University election, 211
  double first-classman, 53
  elected president of Union, 47
  last speech at the Union, 52
  Manning and, 40
  secretary of the Union, 43, 46, 47
Gladstone, John (Sir), 52
Glynne, Stephen, 29
Goddard, Dr., headmaster of Winchester, 15
Godfray, H. M., of Exeter, 262, 282
Goschen, George Joachim (Viscount), 147, 149 *et seq.*, 162, 239
  Lord Milner and, 261
  opposes admission of Jews into Parliament, 150
  reminiscences of the Union by, 151
  speech at jubilee banquet, 241
Gosse, Edmund, 190
Goulburn, Dr., 149
  and the "Decade" society, 86
Gould, M. H., of Trinity, 257, 259[1]
Grant-Duff, M. E. (Sir), 112, 114 *et seq.*, 125, 153
  diary of, 114
  his familiarity with foreign politics, 115, 116
Green, C. A. H., of Keble (Bishop), 262, 281
Green, Thomas Hill, 168, 169
  and the War of Secession, 254
Greenfield, Rev. J. R., 266
Gresley, 22
Grey, Earl, Ministry of, 37, 48
Gribble, Francis, of Exeter College, his epigram on Burgon, 210
  "The Romance of the Oxford Colleges" by, 210
Griffith-Boscawen, Arthur (Sir), 262, 282
Grose, T. H., of Queen's, 231, 234, 235, 263
  his work for the Union, 267
Guedalla, Philip, "Ignes Fatui" of, 304

H

HADDEN, R. H., of Merton, 257, 257
Halcombe of B.N.C., 160
Hall, Dr., Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, 15
Hall, Sydney P., of Pembroke, a series of cartoons by, 205 *et seq.*
  annotations of his Oxford cartoons by, 206
  joins the *Graphic* staff, 206
Hallam, Arthur Henry, 34, 35, 36, 43
Hallett, H. I. P., 308
Halsbury, Lord (*see* Giffard, Hardinge)
Hamilton, J. A. (Lord Sumner), 286
Hamilton, William, 29
Hammond, J. L., 293
Hampden, Dr., appointed Bishop of Hereford, 112
Hanmer, John (Sir), 30, 39
Harding of Oriel, 44
Hardinge, A. H. (Sir), 260
Hardy, Gathorne (*see* Gathorne-Hardy)
Hare, Augustus, 7, 10
Hare, Julius, 7
Harlequin, the, 206
Harris, steward of Union, 162, 220, 221
Harris-Burland, J. B., 303
Harrison, Benjamin, 42
Harrison, Frederic, of Wadham, 118, 125, 149, 154
  and the Pre-Raphaelite School, 171
Harrison, H. L., of Christ Church, knighthood for, 214
Hastings, Lord, and the Oxford Union, 29
Hatton, J. L. S., 278
Hawkins, Anthony Hope, 262, 302, 311
Hayman, Rev. Dr. H., 114, 252
  reminiscences of the Union by, 93, 94 *et seq.*, 102, 105
Hebdomadal Board forbid reports of debates, 128
Heber, Reginald, 104
Herbert, Auberon, of St. John's, 214
Herbert, Sidney, of Oriel, 30, 44, 46, 47, 49
  friendship with Manning, 42
  Lord Selborne's reference to, 248
  Manning's tribute to, 242
Hereditary privileges, the Union and, 31
Hervey, Lord Francis, 224
Hessey of St. John's, 84
Heurtley, Professor, and the jubilee banquet, 237
Hewins, W. A. S., 299
Higgin, changes his name to Bellew, 126
Highton of Queen's, 84
Hine, T. H., 298
Hirst, F. W., 294, 302
Hobhouse, Thomas, a story of, 86, 87
Holdsworth, Professor W. S., 298
Hollings of Corpus, 234
Hollis, M. C., 308
Holmes, C. J., 190
  prefatory note to *Story of the Pictures*, 187
Hook, Theodore, editor of *John Bull*, 19, 20
Hook, Walter Farquhar (afterwards Dean of Chichester), 20
Hornby of Oriel, 29

Horton, R. F. (Dr.), 257, 259, 260
Houghton, Lord (*see* Milnes, Monckton)
Howard of Lincoln, 130, 143
Hughes, Arthur, and the Pre-Raphaelite movement, 172, 176, 181, 186
Humbert, Canon Lewis Macnaghten, 100
Hunt, G. Ward, First Lord of the Admiralty, 102
Hunt, W. Holman, 170
  a humorist on "Scapegoat" of, 226–7
  a theory of, bears fruit, 175
  and William Morris, 184
  his monograph on the Pre-Raphaelites, 176
  Study of the Pictures by, 187

I

"IGNES FATUI," Guedalla's, 304
Ilbert, Courtenay (Sir), 197, 212, 217, 225
Inge, Dean, 304
Ingestre, Lord, 130
  moves adjournment of Protection debate, 143
Ingle, F., 291
Ireland, famine - stricken districts in, 106
Irish distress, a grant for relief of, discussed, 106
Irvine, Mr., 160, 163
Irving, H. B., 282

J

JACKSON, Blomfield, 295
Jackson, Herbert (the "British Workman"), 300–2
Jackson, Thomas, and "Uniomachia," 68
Jacob, Edgar (afterwards Bishop of St. Albans), 218, 225
James, Dr. Herbert Armitage, his recollections of Oxford and the Union, 233 *et seq.*, 258
Jayne, F. J. (Bishop of Chester), 232
Jenkyns, Dr., of Balliol, 16, 76
Jeune, Francis, of Balliol (Lord St. Helier), 220, 225
  and the Union frescoes, 188
  reminiscences of Union by, 212, 213
Jews, disabilities of, Sir Robert Cecil on, 129
Jex-Blake, (Dean), tribute to Goschen, 150
John Bull, 17 *et seq.*, 24, 85
Johnson, M. J., 100
Johnstone, of Exeter, 121, 130
  and the Protection debate, 143
Jose of Hertford, 299
Jowett, Benjamin, 79, 259
  and the Trevor episode, 81
Jubilee banquet, the, 236 *et seq.*

K

KAGOSIMA, massacre of, 255
Keble, John, 170
Kent of Trinity, 8
King, J. R., of Merton, 257
King, waiter at the "House," 163
King-Smith of Brasenose, 162
Knatchbull-Hugessen (Lord Brabourne), 47, 49, 59
  a volume of verses by, 132
  and Protection debate, 130, 131, 143, 200
Knaus, C. T., 264
Knox, R. A., of Balliol, 304

L

LAKE of Balliol (later Dean), 79, 84, 85, 89
  and the "Decade" society, 86
  and the Trevor row, 80
Lambert, Brooke, 148
Landon, Percival, 280
Lathbury of Brasenose, 154, 162
Laureateship, revival of, discussed, 293
Lavie, Germaine, of Christ Church, 163
Lawrence, F. W. (Pethick), 295
Leopold, Prince, 236
Library catalogue, a new, 222
Liddon, H. P. (Canon), 116, 298
  attends jubilee banquet, 251
  elocution of, 117
Lightfoot, Dr., a cartoon of, 207
Lincoln, Earl of (later Duke of Newcastle), 42, 46. 47, 51
Lindsay, K. M., 306
Literature and art, dual mission of, 174
Liversidge, Howard, 284, 292
Lochee, Lord (*see* Robertson, E.)
Lock, Walter (Canon), 225, 235
Lomer of Oriel, 128, 130, 141, 145 *et seq.*
London Press, the, and Oxford Union, 13
Lowe, Robert (Lord Sherbrooke), 60, 64, 65, 74, 78
  Jowett and, 80–1
  Sir Francis Doyle on, 47, 48
  Union activities of, 47, 48, 51, 53
Lushington, Godfrey, of All Souls, 159, 173
Lyall of Balliol, 46, 47, 51, 59, 76
Lygon, Frederick (afterwards Earl Beauchamp), 116, 122, 129, 130, 152
  favours Protection, 132
Lygon (7th Earl Beauchamp), 294
Lymington of Balliol, 259

M

MACDONALD, N. H., 29
Macdonell, P. J., 293
Mackarness of Merton (afterwards Bishop of Oxford), 104, 251
  and the jubilee banquet, 251

Mackay, Aeneas, of University, 257
Mackinder, Halford (Sir), 265
Mackinnon, Campbell, of Queen's, 224
Maclean, Donald, of Balliol, 11, 14, 18, 23
McGregor, A. J., of Oriel, 262, 265
McNeill, J. G. Swift, 238
Magee, J. A. V., 266, 268, 281
Magrath, James, of Queen's, 214
Mahon (Earl Stanhope), 17, 25
Manning, H. E. (Cardinal), 30, 31, 35, 37, 39 *et seq.*, 237
  his friendship with Gladstone, 40
  last Union speech of, 44
  Sir J. Coleridge on, 252
  speech at jubilee banquet, 241–3
Mansel, erudition of, 92, 101
Marett, R. R., 266
Marjoribanks, Edward, entertains Dean Inge, 304
Marriott, Charles of, Oriel, 42, 66, 74, 75, 79, 80
  and the Trevor incident, 80
  as peacemaker, 66, 67, 80
Marriott, Wharton Booth, 102
Marshall of Magdalen, 17, 27
Martyrs' Memorial, the, Coleridge and, 111
Marvin, F. S., 265
Mason, A. E. W., 311
Massie of Wadham, 55, 59, 60, 63, 64, 65, 66
Matthews, R. C., 309
Maurice, Frederick Denison, 55, 121
Maxse of St. John's, 283
Mayow, and the "Ramblers," 66
Mellish, Lord Justice, 79, 251
Merivale, Herman, 29
Merry, Dr., 224, 230
Meyrick of Trinity (Prebendary), 115, 122, 124, 125, 128, 129
Micklem, N., 260
Midleton, Lord (*see* Brodrick, Hon. St. John)
Milman, Henry Hart, and the Union movement, 7
Milner, Alfred (Lord), 259, 261
Milnes, Monckton (afterwards Lord Houghton), 34, 35, 37, 42
Mitchinson of Pembroke (Bishop), 154
Moncrieff, Union speeches of, 44, 52
Monro, Arthur, and the Pre-Raphaelite movement, 172
  sculpture by, 176, 180
Moore, Edward, of Queen's, 214
Morier, Robert (Sir), 112, 115
Morley, John (Lord), 154, 168, 265
  addresses Union, 294
Morning Post attacks Coleridge, 108
Morrah, Herbert Arthur, 278, 293, 308
  and Home Rule for Ireland, 203
Morris, William, of Exeter, 169
  and the Pre-Raphaelite movement, 171, 172, 228
  mural paintings by, 176, 183, 184
  nickname of, 175
  Watts's portrait of, 174
Morrison, James Cotter, of Lincoln, 154
Mortimer, G. F., of Balliol, 262, 264
Mowbray (hitherto known as Cornish), 76, 77, 78, 79
Mowbray, Right Hon. J. R., 82, 252, 253
  a reminiscent speech at jubilee banquet, 239
Mowbray, R. G. C., of Balliol (Sir Robert), 235
  returns thanks for toast of Oxford Union, 249
Mozley, Thomas, of Oriel, 31, 57, 58, 86
Mural decoration of Oxford Union building, 171 *et seq.*
Murray, Charles, of Oriel, 23, 29
Murray, Gilbert, 265, 282
Murray-Smith of Oriel, 130
Mylne, L. G. (afterwards Bishop of Bombay), 225

N

NANCE, J. T. (Canon), 236
Neate, Charles, 129
Nepean, E. A., of University, 265
Nettleship, Henry, 169
Nettleship, R. L., 255
Newbolt, Henry (Sir), 303
Newman of Oriel (Cardinal), 76
Nicholl of Balliol, 162
Nichols, Beverley, 302
Nicholson, Edward, of Trinity, 63
  and the jubilee banquet, 234
Nobleman, undress collegiate garb of a, 104
Norreys, Lord, 54
Northcote, Stafford (afterwards Earl of Iddesleigh), 84, 89, 225
  lays foundation stone of new debating-hall, 253
Novelists, and the Union, 302

O

OAKES of Merton, 59, 60
Oakley of Brasenose (Dean), 154, 156, 162
  a humorous double examination paper by, 157
  favours Pre-Raphaelite movement, 171
  how he honoured the Thirty-nine Articles, 156
O'Connor, T. P., visits Union, 299
Odell of Christ Church, 29
Ogle, Dr. J. A., 99
Oman Charles (Sir), 264
Ossory, Lord, 29
Oxenham, H. N., 116, 119, 149
  Plenderleath on, 118
Oxford, academic life at, 6
  attitude of dons towards junior men, 155

Oxford, college influences in, 8
  demolition of old buildings in Cornmarket Street, 213
  the Professorship of Poetry at, 208
  vexatious restrictions at, 155
Oxford Corn Exchange, jubilee banquet at, 234 *et seq.*
Oxford Debating Society, 10 *et seq.*
  becomes the "Oxford Union Society," 26
Oxford Herald, an obituary notice in the, 26
Oxford Magazine, publication of, 207
Oxford Movement, the, 62, 110, 216
Oxford Undergraduates' Journal, the, 207
Oxford Union, the, a striking example of loyalty in, 293
  an amusing anecdote of a forgetful president, 229
  and the question of Sunday use of rooms, 83
  art at, 166 *et seq.*
  complete list of presidents of, 313–316
  compulsory attendance discussed, 31
  Conservatism in, 306
  debate on Irish distress in, 106
  decoration fund appeal, 263
  efforts to restore mural paintings, 179 *et seq.*
  fiftieth anniversary of, 234 *et seq.*
  first meeting of, 26
  foundation of, 3
  guests of Birmingham and Edgbaston Debating Society, 296
  influence and the mind of, 192 *et seq.*
  lack of a dining hall in, 310
  library of, 297
  membership qualifications of, 60, 99
  mural paintings in, 171 *et seq.*, 228
  new debating hall of, 253
  official report of jubilee banquet, 238 *et seq.*
  old fireplace of, 256
  peace with the "Ramblers," 75
  proposed expulsion of "Ramblers," 64
  reactionary zeal of, 44
  reading room, 213
  revision of rules, 97
  roll of honour, 299
  suitable premises acquired for, 98
  the "Decade" Society and, 86
  war memorial, 305–6
  Woodward's design for debating hall of, 166 *et seq.*
Oxford University, contest for representation of, 112
  influence of current affairs in, 57
  question of nationalization of, 198
  reforms in, 5
  (*see also* University)

P

Packer of St. Edmund Hall, 130
Palmer (Archdeacon), 268, 298
Palmer, Edwin James (Bishop), 282
Palmer of Magdalen (cousin of Roundell Palmer), 54
Palmer, Roundell (Lord Selborne), 42, 47, 59, 60, 64, 66, 77, 78
  and the jubilee banquet, 237, 246
Paphlagonia, partridges in, 230
Parkin, G. R. (Sir), on Oxford ideals in education, 259
Parliamentary reform, debate on, 47
Parmiter, S. C., 262, 263
Parnell, Paul, 92, 94
  a London memorial to, 91
Pater, Walter, 279
Patten, John Wilson, 14, 27, 252
Paul, H. M., 304
Paul, H. W., of Corpus, 259
Peachey, J. H., 282
Pearson of Oriel, 120, 121, 130, 136, 147, 149, 153
Peel, Hon. A. G. V., 262, 267
Peel, Hon. S. C., 280
Peel, Hon. W. R. W. (second Viscount), 261
Peel, Sir Robert, defeated at Oxford, 45
  expounds a new policy, 127
Pember, Dr., 298
Pemberton, J. S. G., 286
Pembroke College as "a nest of singing-birds," 8
Percy, Lord, 219
Phillimore, Hon. R. C., 281, 283, 284, 285
Phillimore, J. S., 293
Phillimore, Walter, 218, 225
Plenderleath, William, 117, 122, 129
Plumptre of University, 95, 96, 130
Poetry, Oxford's "official eye" for, 208
Poetry, Professorship of, a cartoon on, 209
"Points of View," Lord Birkenhead's, 288
Pollen, A. H., of Trinity, 265
Pollen, John Hungerford, of Merton, and the Pre-Raphaelites, 172, 174
  mural painting by, 176, 179, 181
Pope, H. M. R., of St. John's, 225
Portal, George, of Christ Church, 97, 104, 130, 131
  speech of, in Protection debate, 140
Portal, Melville, 104
Positivist school, growth of, 118, 120
Pott of Magdalen, 104
Poulton E. B. (Prof.), 260
Powell, York (Prof.), 279, 311
Powles, R. C., 104
Powys, Hon. T. A., 14
Pre-Raphaelite movement, the, 165, 169 *et seq.*, 214, 226
Presidents of Oxford Union, complete list of, 313–316
Pringle, Mr., 310
Prinsep, Val., a pen-picture of, by Lady Burne-Jones, 174
  and the Pre-Raphaelite movement, 172, 174
  introduced to Burne-Jones and Morris, 174
  mural painting by, 176, 185

Proctors' message, a, and the Union's answer, 27, 28, 250, 251
Protection *v.* Free Trade debate, 128, 130 *et seq.*, 200
Pulling, F. S., of Exeter, 236
Punch, political cartoons of, 170
Purcell, Mr., on Manning, 40
Pusey, E. B., visits a prisoner, 125

Q

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, debating society of, 216

R

RALEIGH of Balliol, 259
Ralph of Queen's, 128
" Ramblers," the, 64 *et seq.*
  a peace banquet, 75
  a short-lived magazine of, 77
Randall of Trinity, 8
Rashdall, Hastings (Dean), 286
Rawlinson of Trinity, 84, 88, 254
Redington, Right Hon. Christopher, 214, 225
  reminiscences by, 215
Reeves of Merton, 60
Reform Bill, Gladstone's undergraduate fear of, 50
Register, Cobbett's, 85
Rentoul, Gervais, of Christ Church, 304
Rhodes, Cecil, 258
Richards of Wadham, 234, 235
Rickards, George, 42
Ripley, A. E., 264, 279
Riviere, William, and Rossetti, 177, 179
  and the Arthurian legends, 180 *et seq.*
  mural paintings by, 176
Roberts, Earl, visits Union, 298
Robertson, E. (afterwards Lord Lochee), 225
Roberston, Frederic, of Brasenose, 84, 254
Robinson, Alfred, of New College, 212, 217, 225, 226
Robinson, Richard, of Worcester, 212, 217, 225, 226
Rogers, Benjamin Bickley, of Wadham, 152, 155
  an eloquent speech by, and its climax, 153
Rogers, Thorold, Sydney Hall's cartoons of, 206
" Romance of the Oxford Colleges," Gribble's, 210
Rosebery, Lord, tribute to Lord Salisbury, 299
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, and Riviere, 177, 179
  and the Pre-Raphaelite movement, 169, 172, 229
  his connexion with the Working Men's College, 175
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, his contribution to Arthurian legends, 182
  mural painting by, 176, 177, 229
Round, Mr., 112
Royal Commission of 1922, the, 196, 198
Rugbeian influence in the Union, 123, 147, 162
Ruskin, John, 251
  a cartoon of, 209
  first speech in Union, 90
Russell, Lord, resigns membership of Oxford Union, 29

S

SABBATARIANISM, crusade against, 159
Sadler Michael (Sir), 265, 283
St. Aldwyn, Lord, 299
St. Ambrose's, and the Union, 148
St. Helier, Lord (*see* Jeune, Francis)
St. John's, and the shaving rule, 155
Sala, G. A., 287
Salisbury, Marquess of (*see* Cecil, Lord Robert)
Sanday, William, 221, 225
Sanders of Balliol, 265
Sandford of Balliol (afterwards Lord Sandford), 104
Sargeaunt, John, 286
Sargent of Brasenose, 296
Saunderson, Colonel, visits Union, 294
Savery, G. M., of Lincoln, 259
Scaife, C. H. O., 303
Sclater of Balliol (Lord Basing), 105
Sclater, Philip, 116
Scott, Dr., his part in " Uniomachia," 71
Selborne, Lord (*see* Palmer, Roundell)
Senior defends the " Ramblers," 66
Seton, Malcolm, 293
Shairp, John Campbell, and Coleridge 109
Shaw, Hon. A., of Trinity, 304
Shee of Christ Church, 215, 219
Sheffield, Lord, 225
Shelley, his career at Oxford, 32, 33
Shelley *v.* Byron debate at the Union, 34
Sherbrooke, Lord (*see* Lowe, Robert)
Shirley of Wadham, 114, 130, 134, 147
Sidebotham, Rev. J. S., 180
Simcox brothers, 218
Simon, John Allsebrook (Sir), 264, 286,290
  reminiscences of the Union by, 292 *et seq.*
Sinclair, " Skimmerian," 66, 68, 74, 78
Sinclair, William Macdonald (afterwards Archdeacon of London), 236
Slavery question debate at the Union, 52
Sloman of Pembroke, 259
Smith, C. E., of Oriel, 25
Smith, Douglas, 29
Smith, F. E. (Lord Birkenhead), 264, 286, 288, 289, 290
  his " Points of View," 311
Smith Goldwin, Sydney Hall's cartoons of, 206

Smith, H. J. S., of Balliol, 123
Smith, Henry, 147
Smith of Trinity, 8
Smith, Reginald Bosworth, 214, 255
Smith, Sydney, 104
Snowden, H. G., of Lincoln, 262
Spooner (Warden of New College), 225
Stanhope, Rodham Spencer, of Christ Church, and the Pre-Raphaelites, 174
  mural painting by, 176, 185
  speech at jubilee banquet, 243
Stanley, Arthur (Dean), 76, 80, 83, 86, 89, 311, 312
  and question of opening Union rooms on Sunday, 83
Stanley, Lyulph (Lord Stanley of Alderley), 168, 225, 226, 256
Stanton of Balliol, 107, 124
"Star Chamber, Proceedings of the," 71
Stockdale committed to prison, 108
Strachan-Davidson of Balliol, 197, 218, 225, 226, 257
Strauss, D. F., a *Westminster Gazette* article on, 114
Streatfield of Trinity, 8
Stride, W. K., of Exeter, 280
Strong, Dr., Bishop of Ripon, 306
Strong of Christ Church, 130
Stuart-Wortley, J. A., 18
Stubbs, Bishop, and Sir John Coleridge, 252
Sumner, Lord (*see* Hamilton, J. A.)
Sunday observance, question of, 83, 212
Sunderland, Thomas, 34, 35, 36
Sweepstakes, a humorous sort of, 230
Swinburne, Algernon, of Balliol, 168
  and the Pre-Raphaelites, 174, 175
  Sydney Hall's picture of, 208

T

Tait, A. C. (Archbishop), 47, 48, 51, 53, 60, 64, 65, 81, 108, 237
  Right Hon. J. R. Mowbray's reminiscences of, 240
  Sir John Coleridge and, 252
  speech at jubilee banquet, 238
Talbot, Edward Stuart (afterwards Bishop of Winchester), 23, 217, 225, 226, 257
  his recollections of the Oxford Union, 217
Tancock of Exeter, 214
Taylorian Institution, foundation of, 111
Temple, Archbishop, maiden speech at Union, 298
Temple, William (Bishop), 303
Tennyson, influence of, on the Pre-Raphaelites, 170, 181, 186
  popularity of, as poet and thinker, 170
Thackeray, as contributor to *Punch*, 170
Theatre, the, debate on influences of, in the Union, 105
Thomson of Queen's (Archbishop), 81, 106
Thursfield, J. R., and the Union frescoes, 189
Times, the, a motion for exclusion of, 94
Toke, L. A., 283
Town and gown fights, 54
Tractarian movement, the, 62, 110, 216
Trevor of Magdalen, 79, 80
  appointed honorary canon of York, 81
Trevor row, the, 80
Trinity College, cultivation of rhetoric in, 8
Tupper-Carey, A. D., 262, 265
Turner of Exeter, 162
Turner, A. H. (Sir), 257
Tyrwhitt, St. John, of Christ Church, and the Pre-Raphaelites, 175

U

"Uniomachia," inception and publication of, 67 *et seq.*
  Right Hon. J. R. Mowbray on, 239
"United Debating Society," the, first title of the Oxford Union, 4
University, a modern definition of the term, 57
University life, characteristics of, 2
University Museum, Benjamin Woodward and, 166, 167

V

Vance of Lincoln, 150
Vane, Hon. Harry (later Duke of Cleveland), 11
  and *John Bull*, 21
Vaughan of Balliol, 44
Venables, H. A., of New College, 258, 259
Venables of Exeter, 130, 135
Vernon, Egerton, 17
Vesey (Viscount de Vesci), 10, 11
Victorianism, the Union and, 293, 294
Villiers of Merton, 29
Vincent, Mr., Union's strained relations with, 97, 98

W

Wadham College, its influence on the Union, 55
Wall of Balliol, 78
Wallas, Graham, of Corpus, 260
Ward, Arnold, 293
Ward, Mrs. Humphry, and T. H. Green, 169
  visits Union, 300
Ward, W. G., of Balliol, 60, 64, 74, 75, 76
  and the Trevor affair, 82
Warkworth, Lord (Earl Percy), 225, 284
Warren, Herbert (Sir), 261
Waterhouse, Alfred, designs new debating hall, 254
Watson, Albert, 122, 123
Watson, Alfred, 115

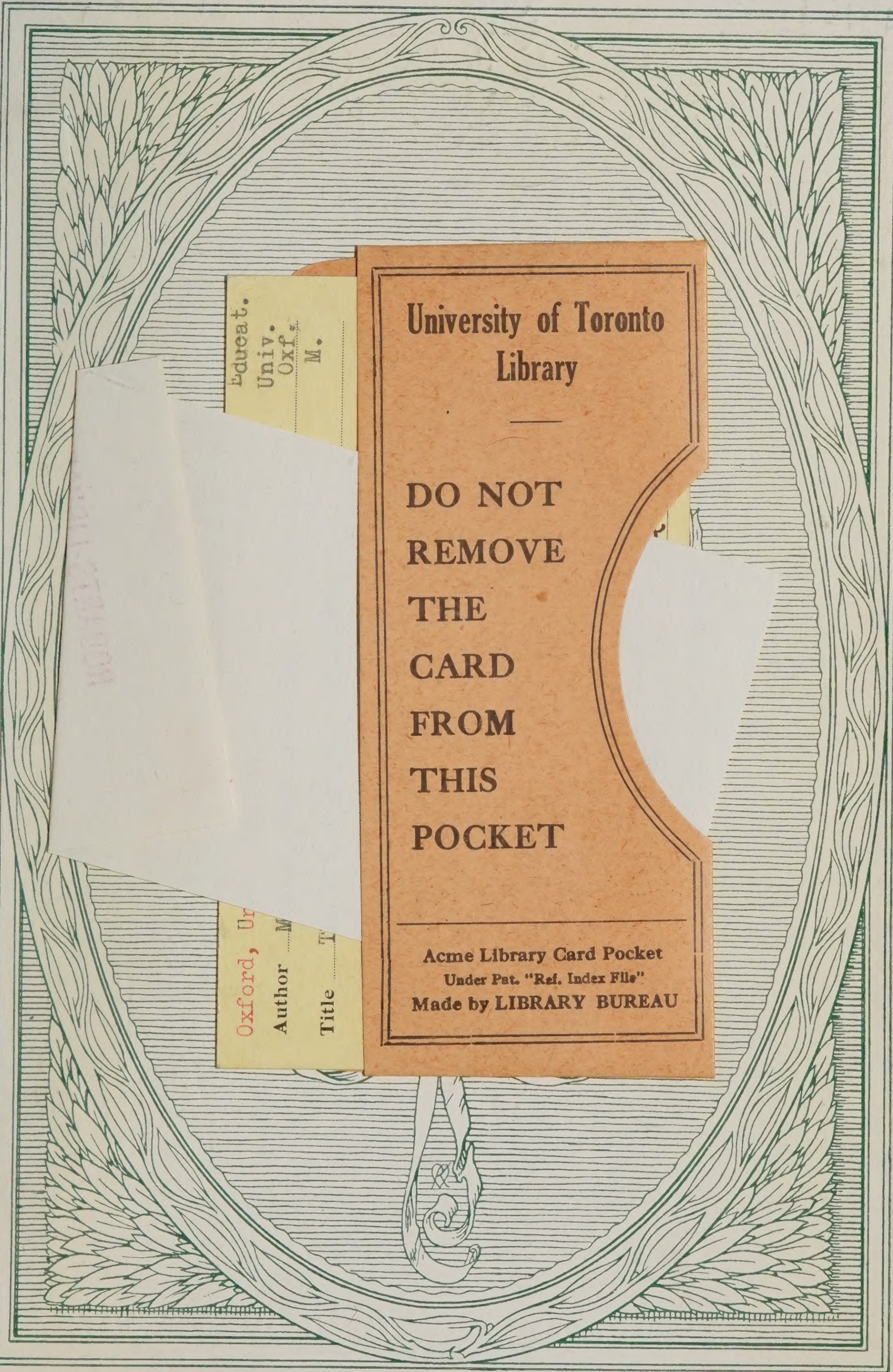
Watts, George Frederick, and the Pre-Raphaelites, 174
  portrait of William Morris, 174
Webster, Sir Richard (Lord Alverstone), 263
Wedderburn, Alexander, 254
"W. E. G." Society, the, 55
Wells, Joseph, 298
Westwood, Professor, 209
Wetherell of Brasenose, 116, 117, 118, 156
Whately of Christ Church, 130, 143
Wickham of New College, 154
Wilberforce, Henry, 39
Wilberforce, Robert, of Oriel, 17, 39
Wilberforce, Samuel (Bishop), 17, 24, 27, 31, 39, 42
  attacked by *John Bull*, 24
  Manning's tribute to, 243
  Sydney Hall's cartoon of, 206
Wildman of Christ Church, 13
Williams, A. Dyson, 286
Williams, E. Bickerton, 296
Williams, J. Fischer, 282
Wilson, P. W., visits Union, 295
Winchilsea, Lord, 299
Wise, B. R., of Queen's, 260
Women-students at Oxford, 195
Woodruff, J. D., 308
  the "Liberal quip," 289
Woodward, Fellow of All Souls', 298
Woodward, Benjamin, designer of debating hall, 166, 298
  personality of, 167
Woodward's Museum, embellishment of, 173
Wordsworth, Charles (Bishop), 29, 34, 51, 54
  prophesies Gladstone's premiership, 51
Working Men's College, the, Rossetti and, 175
Worsley, William (Sir), 286
Wrangham of Brasenose, 17, 20, 26
Wyatt's rooms, 49
  debates in, 28 *et seq.*
Wykehamist coterie, and the Union, 63

Z

ZEDLITZ, G. W. E. VON, 281, 283, 287

PRINTED BY CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, LA BELLE SAUVAGE, LONDON, E.C.4.
F. 19.1023

DOMI MINA
NUS TIO
ILLU MEA
OXFORD UNION SOCIETY



Educat.
Univ.
Oxf.
M.

Oxford, Un
Author M
Title T

University of Toronto
Library

DO NOT
REMOVE
THE
CARD
FROM
THIS
POCKET

Acme Library Card Pocket
Under Pat. "Ref. Index File"
Made by LIBRARY BUREAU

UTL AT DOWNSVIEW
D RANGE BAY SHLF POS ITEM C
39 13 17 02 09 015 8